

**IN TIMES OF LIQUID MODERNITY: EXPERIENCES OF
THE PARALYMPIC STUDENT-ATHLETE**

Volume II

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Ph.D.

2013

**IN TIMES OF LIQUID MODERNITY: EXPERIENCES OF
THE PARALYMPIC STUDENT-ATHLETE**

Volume II

NATALIE JANE CAMPBELL

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
University of East London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

May 2013

Volume II

Volume II of this thesis provides the reader with more literary and analytical detail from the study. It is sectioned into appendices A – K with each appendix being granted the subtitles within each section. These appendices are referred to at various points in Volume I of the thesis.

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Appendix A

Ethics



MISS NATALIE CAMPBELL
3 SPRING TERRACE
READING
BERKSHIRE
UNITED KINGDOM
RG2 0BD

Date: 20 December 2011

Dear Natalie,

Project Title:	<i>Paralympic narratives: The Elite Disabled Student-Athlete</i>
Researcher(s):	<i>Natalie Campbell</i>
Supervisor(s):	<i>Professor Keith Gilbert</i>

I am writing to confirm that the review panel appointed to your application have now granted ethical approval to your research project on behalf of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'UEL Code of Good Practice in Research' (www.uel.ac.uk/qa/manual/documents/codeofgoodpracticeinresearch.doc) is adhered to.

Yours sincerely,

Merlin Harries
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Telephone: 0208-223-2009
Email: m.harries@uel.ac.uk

Appendix B

Participant Information Documentation

INFORMATION SHEET

Full Title of Project:

In Times of Liquid Modernity: Experiences of the Paralympic Student-Athlete

Name, position and contract address of principal researcher:

Natalie Campbell

Post Graduate Room UH 2.16
University of East London
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London
E15 4LZ

Email: n.j.campbell@uel.ac.uk
Contact: 07899 908812

Purpose of this Study:

This research seeks to investigate and examine the athletic, academic and social experiences of the disabled elite student-athlete in higher education institutions in the UK. Using a liquid modern conceptual approach and an interpretative analysis methodology, this phenomenological research will be utilized to assess and evaluate how the athletes perceive their university and everyday lives. From the narratives gained, questions of identity and experience will be explored to uncover self-perceptions of the Paralympic student-athlete and also what life experiences may have contributed to the construction of their self-identity and of their life-worlds.

Personal benefits from the study:

At present there is no literature which expresses the voices the experiences of being a Paralympic student-athlete studying at university within the UK. Studies show that many people who participate in sociological studies which involve interviews have enjoyed the opportunity to reflect openly on their life experiences, giving them a chance to evaluate and re-evaluate their current life characteristics, conditions and directions. It is anticipated that the results of this study will be used to gain a better understanding of the life experiences of Paralympic student-athletes. There are no known disadvantages from taking part in this study.

Procedures involved in this study:

As a participant in this study you will be asked to:

- 1: Engage in a maximum of 2 interviews lasting as long as is requested by the participant
- 2: Read completed transcriptions of the interview(s)
- 3: Provide the researcher with feedback and commentary regarding:
 - a) The accuracy of the transcription of the data provided in each interview
 - b) Any other necessary and relevant information to aid in the transcription and interpretation of the interview(s)

Time requirement:

Face to face interview time is expected to be a maximum of 2 hours per interview with the expectation of 1 to 2 interviews per participant. All interviews are to take place before May 2012. Taking into consideration the length of time required for interview transcriptions, transcription interpretations and the cessation of project work during May 2012 and September 2012 for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, participants may be asked to be involved in the study up until December 2012.

Interview(s) and Interview topics:

Interviews will be recorded on a digital visual recording device. Interviews will be semi-structured and will involve asking the participant open ended questions regarding their past, present and future, with particular regard to being an athlete, a student and disabled.

Stopping the interview:

Participants are advised that they should inform the principle researcher of any physical, psychological or emotion distress occurring as a result of the interview. Should this occur the interviews will be stopped immediately.

Withdrawal from the study:

Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

Referral mechanisms for participants:

Any participant suffering from any form of physical, psychological or emotional discomfort or distress during or after the interviews will be offered contact to their current (or past) university's internal counselling services.

Data protection:

During the study all written and audio information from each participant will be password file protected and will be locked in a drawer for safe keeping. Once granted permission by the university all information will be permanently destroyed using paper shredding machines and file wipe software.

Confidentiality:

This research forms part of the requirement for a doctoral degree in the sociology of sport and the findings may result in publication. To ensure the confidentiality of individuals' data, each participant will be identified by a participant identification code known only to the principal investigator.

Prof. Keith Gilbert (Director of Studies)

Natalie Campbell (Principle researcher)



CONSENT FORM

Full Title of Project:

In Times of Liquid Modernity: Experiences of the Paralympic Student-athlete

Name, position and contract address of principal researcher:

Natalie Campbell

Post Graduate Room UH 2.16
University of East London
Stratford Campus
Water Lane
London
E15 4LZ

Email: n.j.campbell@uel.ac.uk
Contact: 07899 908812

-
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
 2. I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the principal researcher of the nature, purpose, and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. ☐
 3. I have been advised about any possible feelings of discomfort or distress which may result from participation in the study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result. ☐
 4. I shall inform the principal researcher immediately if I feel any symptoms of emotional, psychological or physical discomfort or distress (during or after the study). Relevant referral mechanisms have been clearly explained to me. ☐
 5. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice. ☐
 6. I agree to the interview being video recorded. ☐
 7. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications. ☐
 8. I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and shall be securely destroyed after the study. ☐
 9. I acknowledge that in consideration for completing the study I shall receive the sum of £30 vouchers. ☐
-

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

NAME:

SPORT (INC POSITION IF NECESSARY):

NGB:

AGE:

ETHNICITY:

PARALYMPIC CLASSIFICATION (IF KNOWN):

CLINICAL CLASSIFICATION OF DISABILITY:

UNIVERSITY (OR PREVIOUS):

DEGREE SUBJECT:

1 ST INT	2 ND INT	TRAN	S. OFF	ONLY	F.BACK	2.AGREE	COMP

P.Name:

3rd January 2011

RE: Participants required for PhD study

Dear:

My name is Natalie Campbell and I am a PhD student at the University of East London.

Previous to starting my PhD at UEL, I was Lead Athlete Support Manager at the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme. I am aware that your university operates either as a Hub or Satellite institute within the TASS network and therefore hosts a number of 2012 Scholarship student-athletes.

As the High Performance Sport Manager, I am contacting you in regards to participant recruitment for the study. The study explores the academic, athletic and social experience of the Paralympic student-athlete, via the method of interviews.

I would be very grateful if you could pass on my contact details to any TASS or University scholars who meet the following criteria:

1. Studying full time at your university or have graduated in the last 12 months.
2. On a GB Paralympic Performance pathway
3. Are over the age of 18
4. Do not have diminished mental capacity

Please ask any athletes who may be interested in taking part in the study to contact myself directly at n.j.campbell@uel.ac.uk. Upon receipt of an email from any interested athletes I will send them more detailed information sheet about the background and purpose of the study.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best wishes,
Natalie Campbell

Appendix C

Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Hi. Can you please just state your name, your sport including your classification (if you know it) and the clinical classification of your impairment.

SPORT

1. Can you explain to me how you first became involved in your sport?
2. Are you able to explain to me how important it is for you to become a Paralympian?
3. Do you see yourself as an elite athlete?
 - a. Can you tell me why you do / don't
4. Many athletes comment that they sacrifice a lot to be the best at their sport. Do you feel like you have sacrificed anything to be where you are?

EDUCATION

1. Why did you choose to study your degree topic?
 - a. What do you want to be later on?
2. Thinking about the future, once you retire from being an athlete, then what?
3. Can you please describe to me your student experience?
 - a. What do you think about it is different to?
 - b. What do you think about it is similar to?
 - c. Do you feel you're missing out on anything?
4. If you had to describe what your time at university means to you, what would you say?

5. What is it like being at uni?

LIFESTYLE

1. Since deciding you wanted to become a Paralympic athlete, can you tell me what the biggest changes to your life have been?
 - a. How have you coped with them?
2. If possible, can you talk to me about the most important relationships you have in your life right now: friends, relatives, partners, support staff etc?
3. Do you think about your future much?
4. What do you do when you're not doing your sport?

DISABILITY

1. Do you see yourself as being disabled?
 - a. Can you tell me why / why not?
2. What is the most common misconception you think people have about you?
 - a. And about disabled people in general?
3. The classification process within Paralympic sports is usually a contentious issue. Can you please talk to me about your experiences of classification / or your feelings towards classification?
4. What does the term disability mean to you?

BEING YOU

1. How do you think other people see you?

2. Tell me, what about your life is the same as everyone else's around you right now and what do you think is different?
3. Do you think you have you changed much during your time at university?
4. Where do you think you fit in most – sport / uni / friends - and what does this mean to you?
5. Can you tell me who you are? Who are you?

Appendix D

Participant Information Table

Table1: Table of Participant information

* = High Performance Centre for sport

** = Non High Performance Centre for sport

Participant	Age	Gender	Interview Length	University	Degree	Sport	Paralympic Classification	Disability
Amy	23	F	59 mins	HPC*	Linguistics and Phonetics	Swimming	S9 - SB8 - SM9	Amelia
Beth	21	F	127 mins	HPC	Speech & Language Therapy	Sailing	7	Complex Regional Pain Syndrome with Fixed Dystonia
Chris	28	M	84 mins	N-HPC**	PG Law	W/C Fencing	A	Neuro-muscular Disorder
Emily	19	F	94 mins	HPC	Geography	Swimming	S8 - SM7 - SB8	Osteogenesis Imperfecta
Katy	19	F	85 mins	HPC	Psychology with Sport Studies	Equestrian	4	Turner Syndrome
Helen	19	F	88 mins	N-HPC	Psychology	W/C Table Tennis	5	Juvenile Arthritis
James	23	M	109 mins	N-HPC	Occupational Therapy	Athletics	T46	Amelia
Robert	23	M	99 mins	HPC	- Maths with Statistics	Blind Football	B1	Retinoblastoma

Appendix E

Bauman, Modernity and Postmodernity

Bauman, Modernity and Postmodernity

The following section problemises history in the context of sociological theory to illuminate these shifts.

E.1 Problemising history

Within literature, historians attempt to present a chronological history, dividing it into periodised times which, it is argued, reflect the normative thoughts, cultures and practices of these times. However, some would argue that history is not a science in this sense, and that what some historical writings present as truth might in fact be opinion. Many academics comment that history is written by the victors and the conquerors. Moreover, some philosophers have argued forcefully that historiography constructs as much as it uncovers the 'truths' it pursues (Novick, 1988). The problem is contained 'in nuce' by 17th Century philosopher Pascal's extract from *Pensées* (1669) - "...the truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other". Controversial works by intellectuals such as Howard Zinn (2005), Noam Chomsky (1988) and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (1948) for example, recognise and argue that as society responds to contemporary problems those with authoritative voice can exploit the past for non-historical purposes, either taking from the past or projecting upon it what suits their own society or ideology. The dominant theme in their work is an overwhelming sense of the relativity of all perspectives of human events, that is, of the inevitable historicity of human thought (Berger and Luckman 1991). With most of his work giving voice to the oppressed and the marginalized, Zinn (2005) comments that:

"We were not born critical of existing society (...) we all have an enormous responsibility to bring to the attention of others information they do not have, which has the potential of causing them to rethink long-held ideas."

Bauman's work (and importance to this thesis) deals markedly with the disposed, the excluded and the alienated. Although not giving voice to the displaced per se, his writings offer insight as to how the condition of liquid modernity produces out-casts. This study investigated if this notion of the production of a marginalised population included and is applicable to the Paralympic student-athlete. The following section deals specifically with the path of Bauman's concept of Liquid Modernity.

In order to fully understand and appreciate the development of Bauman's ideas of Liquid Modernity the trajectory of social theory and the history of how Western society has evolved must be considered. It is without question that Bauman's observations of contemporary society be analysed at their very roots, and that previous systems of beliefs, understandings and conceptions of society be considered when attempting to comprehend the engendering of Liquid Modernity. As a consequence, this section of the literature review is weighted towards the development of the understanding of sociology as a discipline to examine the behaviours of societies and of individuals within said societies.

Liquid Modernity concerns itself with the word *Modern*, with the question of 'modernity' interesting sociologists for generations; indeed, Cohen and Kennedy (2000) trace the emergence of modernity back to the 17th Century and the dawn of the revolutionary age of Enlightenment. It is important that the characteristics of modernity be identified and explored to illustrate the significance of sociologists engaging in the comprehensive study of social life,

thus leading to Bauman's concept of Liquid Modernity. However, in order to appreciate the consequences of a shift to the 'modern', the landmark Enlightenment age which brought about historic changes must be reflected upon, as is discussed later, the Enlightenment period influenced European societies by dramatically transforming primary and secondary social institutions (Macdonis & Plummer, 2008). I begin by introducing the concept of 'Modernity' to the reader in regards to the development of Bauman's Liquid Modernity.

E.2 Modernity

The beginning of the 'Modern Era' began at a time of great change for the Western world, when many major events shifted the systems on which modern day social order have been found. The fall of Constantinople in 1453, through to the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th Century marked the years in which historians refer to as the 'modern' era. Spanning over three centuries, the Modern era saw political, sociological and scientific revolution bring about an explosion of cultural and industrial diversities. The comparable mass society dichotomised and for some, religious texts were no longer revered as the source of knowledge. Groupings of people within Western society began a newly revived search for truth via rationalism, explanation and logic.

Strauss (1987) argues that politically, Modernity began with Machiavelli's works which openly rejected the medieval and Platonic and Aristotelian style of analyzing politics. As a philosopher and politician himself, his political ideals were not concerned, by comparison, with ideas about how things should be, rather that politics be led by a realistic analysis of how things really are. Cahn

(2011) comments that while Machiavelli's realism saw a value to war and political violence, his influential ideas have been lasting, despite being somewhat tamed in the 20th and 21st century. For example, his estimations form the foundations of current day free trade, capitalism and globalisation. Political sciences stemming from this phase of modernity often cite Machiavelli's thoughts in the form that useful conflict is deliberately converted as much as possible to formalized political struggles and that economic conflict is encouraged between free, private enterprises (Rahe, 2006). Indeed Bauman (1987, quoted in Fleming & Spicer, 2005, p.100) attributes the origins of his musings on power to Machiavelli, commenting that Machiavelli, rather than being a state-sponsored 'legislator' was "more a disenfranchised 'interpreter' of how power is used to gain desired effects".

The early periods of Modernity saw previous truth claims deflect from the teachings of the philosophers to the quantification and statistics of scientists. This scientific revolution was to inform the foundations of political, economic and sociological change. In the 16th and 17th centuries, experimental scientists such as Copernicus, Bacon and Galileo developed a new approach to physics and astronomy which changed the way people came to think about their existence. Mathematics, physics and chemistry were recasting the capacity, appositeness and relevance of humanity. Kramnick (1995) suggests that the works of Francis Bacon were the first to blend the developing thoughts of political, economic, sociological and scientific theory. His argument for a new experimental based approach to science, which sought no knowledge of formal or final causes, also suggested that science should seek to control nature for the sake of humanity, and not seek to understand it just for the sake of understanding (Kennington et al, 2004). The modern era was characterized by

radical doubt, questioning and emancipatory knowledge. One could argue that here marked the academic beginnings of the objective scientific explanations and subjective philosophical reflections of modern day society.

With these new social and philosophical conditions, however, arose fundamental new challenges as modernity aimed towards "a progressive force promising to liberate humankind from ignorance and irrationality" (Rosenau, 1992, p.5). In the early 18th century, the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed a second phase of modernist political and social thinking. Exemplified the late 18th-century, his work revealed an increasing focus on subjectivity and introspection. Rousseau questioned the natural rationality and sociality of humanity and argued that human nature was much more malleable than had been previously thought. His works were wide ranging, often discussing morality, nature, power, sovereignty, passion, freedom, individuality and civility to name but a few. Links between Bauman and Rousseau can be found in Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750) detailing the corrosive and destructive affect each has on individual authenticity. Rousseau argues that the production and consumption of these disciplines were not beneficial to humankind, as they arose not from authentic human needs but rather as a result of pride and vanity. Moreover, he argues the opportunities they create for idleness and luxury contribute to, as Rousseau calls it, the corruption of man. He proposed that the progress of knowledge makes governments more powerful, crushing individual liberty, concluding that material progress had actually undermined the possibility of true friendship by replacing it with jealousy, fear, and suspicion. Rousseau writes that in degenerate phase of society, man is prone to be in frequent competition with his fellow men while also becoming increasingly dependent on them (Bertram, 2011). It is

unquestionable that the origins of Bauman's discourse on the ability of possession (of the physical and the metaphysical) to divide are connected to Rousseau. This new progression of thought influenced the political (and aesthetic) reasoning's of future modernist thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke and others, and led to a critical review of modernist politics (Simpson, 2007) From this insight into human culture, ambitious movements, from the French Romanticism in the early periods right through to the Communism of Karl Marx in the early 19th century, sparked a new wave of political and philosophical discourse.

Cooper & Burrell (1998) argue that Modernity brought about two main stands of modern thought and its application which still remain maintain in today's works on social theory – the mechanism of social order and the emancipation of the life-world. In context, modernity has been associated with the cultural and intellectual movements of approximately 1450 to 1780 and, in some arguments, extending to the 1970s or later (Toulmin, 1990). Burger (1986) identified five main characteristics of the *modernization* of society, defined as the process of social change begun by industrialization: 1) The decline of small traditional towns; 2) An expansion of personal choices, engendering an unending series of options known as 'individualization'; 3) An increasing diversity in beliefs promoting a more scientific world view; 4) A growing awareness of time with a future orientated view of seeking knowledge; 5) The loss of *gemeinschaft* (community) and the growing condition of *gesellschaft* (society). This final characteristic is of further note as it supports Bauman's comprehension of contemporary society. The concept of community was given prominence by German sociologist Tönnies (1887, in Cahnman & Heberle), who emphasised the impact of modernisation and the degeneration of traditional social structure

on the nature of community. He regarded urban industrial society as a contrast with, rather than a continuation of, the past. The differences between pre-industrial and urban industrial societies gave rise to two types of social relations or dichotomies: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* - often translated as community and society. *Gemeinschaft* can be translated as 'community', but the German word has richer connotations than the English, suggesting moral unity, rootedness, intimacy and kinship (Broom & Selznick, 1973). The pre-industrial *Gemeinschaft* community is homogeneous with social conformity as the norm. Ferlander (2003) highlights that the spatial and temporal coincidence of kinship (*Gemeinschaft* of Blood), locality (*Gemeinschaft* of Place) and shared meanings (*Gemeinschaft* of Mind) create a strong sense of community. Tönnies argued that industrialisation would result in the destruction of *Gemeinschaft* and an increase of *Gesellschaft* relations. *Gesellschaft* is often translated as 'society' or 'association'. It refers to large-scale, impersonal and calculative relationships, which tend to be weak and non-kinship based. In Tönnies' model, the change from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* involves a change from the personal, the emotional and the traditional to the impersonal, the rational and the contractual. The notion of a loss of community was central to Tönnies' (1887) work and reflects his general pessimism about the impact of modern society. Lee and Newby (1983) argue that the search for community represents a longing for security, identity and authenticity, and in a similar vein, Bauman (2001) describes community as another name for 'paradise lost'. Bauman's reflections on the notion of community and belonging will be discussed later in the chapter. The works of Tönnies were, however, retrospective and his comments from the movement from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* could only have been observed by careful consideration of the development of the world surrounding him – both

at a global, macro level and also at the micro levels of his own environment. Indeed Tönnies was witnessing the most accelerated and widespread advancement of society the Western world had known. Kendall (2010) argues that a number of revolutions took place during the eighteenth century, having profound influence on the origins of sociology and the development of contemporary society. She comments that the Enlightenment produced an intellectual revolution in terms of how some thought about social change, progress and critical thinking. Additionally she comments that the optimistic views of the *philosophes* and other social thinkers regarding progress and equal opportunity (for some at least) became part of the impetus for both economic and political revolutions.

The Modern era, characterised socially by industrialisation and the division of labour, saw the advance of the industrial revolution and the growth of capitalism. This division of labour transformed the seemingly simplistic early modern two tiered social class system of the wealthy and the poor into a system of multiple stratification, creating the origins of a social structure that still governs western society to date. For those with money it was a time for exuberance and extravagance; where the affluent members of a society were exposed to the delights of the newly revived 'arts' – music, poetry, art, theatre and history – the 'Romantic' period aligned itself well with the scientific discoveries of the day (Gergen, 1991). Various disciplines of knowledge became increasingly accessible to those afforded a formal education. In stark contrast to this was the development in which (considered) less learned members of society were cast into the workplace. The rapid erection of factories, the use of manual labour to work mass production machines and the rise of the consumerist market saw the sale and exchange of goods –

necessities, luxuries and everything in between – and the phenomenon of global trade explode. Due to the surge of the industrial world, the mass market and society's fashionable affair with acquiring intellect, it was during the Modern era that the development of a structured, classed and acknowledged social system began to emerge, forcing people off the land and into factories. Capitalism provided a huge advance from previous societies. There now existed the productive capacity to feed, clothe and house the entire global population, while scientific and medical advances offered the prospect of understanding and curing diseases. Importantly, especially in relation to Bauman's writings on consumer society, the industrial revolution brought about the production of 'things' – items that transcended the fulfilment of an individual's previous *needs* and provided instead the assumed fulfilment of an individual's *desires*. Indeed it was Plato who first commented that the root of all trouble is always unlimited desire (*The Republic*). However, the new working class creating this wealth were marginalized and excluded from any consultation over what was produced and how. The result was an increasingly growing gap between the classes, between the '*haves*' and the '*have not's*'. Bauman (1982) as cited in Smith (2011) casts aside the notion that any particular social class has a historic mission to play an emancipatory role. Instead, he argued, the whole of industrial society had become subject to a "thorough and all-pervasive discipline which left no group untouched, including the controllers and administrators of capital" (p.2). Bauman (2007, p.65) observed that the contemporary class system now of the 'normal society' has produced an additional class category, one beneath the low / working-class; the 'underclass'. This 'under-class' is segregated, situated separate of the bottom rung of the social ladder and reserved for whom there is no place in any social

class. These are the 'flawed consumers', those that cannot contribute to the producing or consuming of industry. Their inability to contribute to the markets, either as a producer or a consumer, casts them as waste, as a drain. They are what Bauman (2004) calls Human Waste . Bauman argues that this 'under-class' is of absolutely no monetary or fiscal value, yet they remain a smudge on the fringes of modern society, a constant stain on moral our consciousness.

It was during this unfamiliar economic climate that sociology became established as a pioneering discipline within modern science with which to reflect debate and understand the progressions and complexities of humans as individuals and humans as a collective society. Academics were searching for a tool to explain natural science in an increasingly unnatural world. Harriss (2000, p.325) argues that the discipline of sociology was born as a "direct response to the social problems of modernity" and that the term most generally refers to the social conditions, processes, and discourses consequent to the Enlightenment. The decline of religion as an antecedent of certainty and justification of knowledge was autonomous with the increase of capitalism, with various 19th century intellectuals, from Auguste Comte to Karl Marx to Sigmund Freud, attempting to offer scientific and/or political ideologies in the wake of secularisation. Calhoun (2002), comments that Karl Marx, Max Weber and Émile Durkheim are commonly cited as the three principal architects of modern social science and the founding fathers of sociology. As aforementioned, in order to fully appreciate and understand the choice of theoretical framework and the sociological observations presented by Bauman, it is necessary that the literature review provide a brief reflection on seminal figures whose thinking altered the trajectory of modern day social theory, leading to Liquid Modernity. Bauman himself has commented on how the works of Marx, Weber, Durkheim

and Antonio Gramsci caused him to question key historical progressive thoughts in the discipline of sociology (Bauman & Tester, 2001). To provide a full commentary on the works of each of these thinkers is beyond the scope of this literature review, however a condensed overview of the influence of their work in conventional 21st century sociology is acknowledged. Discussions on how Bauman incorporates or departs from the concepts outlined are developed later in the chapter.

The philosophical, economic and political works of Marx have undoubtedly had tremendous influence in the creation of the modern world, and it is difficult to compare the magnitude of these influences to any other thinker of his time. Giddens (2002) states that Marx, whose writing was influenced by personal experience of the early stages of the Industrial revolution, believed: “we have to understand history in order to make history”. Marx's economic analysis of capitalism is based on his version of the labour theory of value, and includes the analysis of capitalist profit as the extraction of surplus value from the exploited proletariat (McLennan, 2006). The analysis of history and economics come together in Marx's prediction of the inevitable economic breakdown of capitalism, to be replaced by communism. Critically, Marx viewed industrialisation and urbanisation as the ‘root causes of a life of poverty, oppression and alienation for the working masses, who found themselves in a distinct social (working) class, exploited mercilessly by the dominant bourgeoisie in modern society which was founded on the voracious capitalist mode of production’ (Jessop, 2008, p.50).

The 2011 ‘Occupy Wall Street / Boston / London’ protests provides an exceptionally contemporary example of the many distinct intricacies of Marx’s

theories operating in the 21st century economy. The protests were not (for most) an absolute rejection of capitalism, nor a civil march demanding a revolt to a socialist government. This observed extreme capitalist nature of the banks prompted Noam Chomsky (The Daily Gotham, 2011) to label the behaviour of the finance industry as “gangsterism”, whilst Bauman (The Guardian, 2011) comments the protests were the result of Capitalism’s ability to “create host organisms” on which to continue its parasitic reign. At the nucleus of the protests was the collective loss of faith many had for the banking industry which, in its essence, was supposed to allow for individual responsibility of free enterprise and the reduction of government dependency. Marx envisaged that in capitalist, industrialised societies the economic system forms society’s infrastructure, and, crucially, other social institutions such as the family, religious and political system – constituting society’s superstructure – are built on this economic foundation and are consequently governed by it. Jessop (2008) comments that as a theorist of society rather than capitalism, Marx is sometimes accused of seeking to explain everything in terms of class relations and at times his work is too vague to decipher the interaction of base (the economic system) and superstructure (the cultural and political system). Marx regarded this mismatch between (economic) base and (social) superstructure as a major source of social disruption and conflict (Elster, 1985). As such, Marx’s views are perhaps open to wide interpretation, however the works of Marx continue to provide a theoretical launch to deliberate the sociological relationship of economics, class, and identity. The associations of how the works of Marx have influenced Bauman’s outlook on society will be discussed later in the chapter.

Along with Marx, Max Weber is arguably one of the foremost social theorist of the 19th century. Weber's wide-ranging contributions gave critical impetus to the birth of new academic disciplines such as sociology and public administration as well as to the significant reorientation in law, economics, political science, and religious studies (Kim, 2008). His initial theoretical focus was on the subjective meaning that humans attach to their actions and interactions within specific social contexts. His methodological writings were instrumental in establishing the self-identity of modern social science as a distinct field of inquiry; he is still claimed as the source of inspiration by researchers employing a positivist methodology and those of a hermeneutic persuasion alike (Scaff, 1998). More substantively, Weber's two most celebrated contributions were the "rationalization thesis," a grand meta-historical analysis of the dominance of the west in modern times, and the "Protestant Ethic thesis," a non-Marxist genealogy of modern capitalism. Weber described many ideal types of public administration and government in his magnum opus *Economy and Society* (1922) with his critical study of the bureaucratisation of society becoming one of the most enduring parts of his work. As the most efficient and rational way of organizing, bureaucratization for Weber was the key part of the rational-legal authority, and furthermore, he saw it as the key process in the on-going rationalization of the Western society (Swedberg, 2005). His proposed *bureaucratic form* details 6 key principles: 1) A formal hierarchical structure; 2) Management by rules; 3) Organization by functional specialty; 4) An "up-focused" or "in-focused" mission; 5) Purposely impersonal; and 6). Employment based on technical qualifications. Weber's work highlights the complexity of the (at times idealistic) bureaucratic form, and articulates how it is deeply embedded in, and constituted by, modern values

such as equality under the law, meritocracy, and accountability (Kriess, Finn & Turner, 2010). Many scholars employ the conjectures of Weber as a framework with which to assay systems of bureaucracy and examine social order, with Weber's work proving instrumental to contemporary areas of inquiry of economic sociology and cultural sociology (Hodgeson, 2008). His professional struggle to marry scientific rationality with sociological subjectivity without diluting the importance of each discipline continues to prevail throughout modern day debates on research methods. Discussions concerning the reflections of Weber's work in Bauman's considerations of liquid modernity are continued later in the chapter.

According to Kivisto (2004), Durkheim was the most influential figure in establishing sociology as a legitimate academic discipline, outlining the fundamental area of observable 'social facts' as its definitive subject matter. Cohen and Kennedy (2000: 340) explain that Durkheim's idea of social solidarity emerged from his observations of a commitment by the people to a set of shared values which he called the 'collective conscience' – or functionalism. Functionalism is a school of thought derived from the analysis of social and cultural phenomena in terms of the functions they perform in a sociocultural system. In functionalism, society is conceived of as a system of interrelated parts in which no part can be understood in isolation from the whole (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969). Much of Durkheim's work was concerned with how societies could maintain their integrity and coherence in the modern era, when things such as shared religious and ethnic background could no longer be assumed; to that end he wrote much about the effect of laws, religion, education and similar forces on society. Durkheim published his first article about the foundation of sociology of morality in 1887, claiming the need for a

Moral Science (1887, p.24). Durkheim, witnessing the deep transformation of the society of his times, posed a plethora of critical questions concerning change in social and existential conditions. He considered the analysis of morality fundamental for understanding the deep social change caused by the process of modernization (Graziosi, 2006). The main question addressed by Durkheim was the moral nature of society. As a scientist, he had two main objectives: to analyze social change with the instruments of the new science, sociology, aiming, at the same time, to confirm that sociology was an autonomous field. Consequently, it can be argued that in all Durkheim's works, there lies a combination of an epistemological-methodological interest with a substantive issue concerning social transformation (Pope, 1998). The contextualisation of Durkheim's work against a 21st century modern society is still heavily researched across many disciplines. The influences of Durkheim's works are wide ranging, extending not only to contemporary theorists of functionalism (and its opposition doctrine of conflict theory), but is also attributed, applied and extended to works concerning conformity and deviance (Merton, 1957), ritual interaction (Goffman, 1967) and systems of emotion, beliefs and cultures (Collins and Makowsky, 1993). Today, successive generations of sociologists continue to apply the depth and layering of Durkheim's work to theorize about everything from social structure, to human agency and to the relationship between the two (Pope, 1998).

Perhaps the final key sociological thinker to acknowledge when considering the retrospective trajectory of Bauman's observations is Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci. Generally regarded as one of the most creative and original thinkers within the Marxist philosophical tradition (Sim, 2002) Gramsci, and his writings are heavily concerned with the analysis of culture and political leadership; he is

notable as a highly original thinker within modern European thought and is renowned for his concept of cultural hegemony as a means of maintaining the state in a capitalist society (Ekers, Loftus & Mann, 2009). Gramsci rejected economism and crude materialism, instead offering a humanist version of Marxism, focusing on human subjectivity and the independence of ideology from economic determinism (Thomas, 2009). If Michel Foucault is correct, of all social theorists, Gramsci is among the most cited but least read (quoted in 1991, p. xix). The diversity of his subject matter—popular theatre, science, economic development, idealism, religion, revolution—the enormous range of his thought, and the conditions under which he worked, have meant that at times it appears as if Gramsci's ideas can do anything for anybody (Ekers, Loftus and Mann, 2009). Ekers et al (2009) argue that any social science that goes by the modifier Gramscian is engaged in a conversation with a complex, at times fragmented, and ultimately open set of texts. Today, Gramsci stands out as indeed one of the very few Marxists whose influence has not declined since 1989. The number of studies of his life and work, and of original applications of his ideas to different disciplines and research, continues to rise (Santucci, 2005), with Bauman being one such follower. One of the roots of Bauman's sociology is his interest in the work of Gramsci and a following attempt to transfer Gramsci's philosophy of praxis into the realm of culture to build a sociological theory of practice (Jay, 2010) Whilst being interviewed (Bunting, 2003) Bauman comments that reading Gramsci gave him "an honourable discharge from Marxism", highlighting Bauman's beliefs that humans are not the unthinking dupes of social structures which determine all, rather that they react to external stimulation and are agents in their own rights.

Whilst some historians argue that the Modern era only truly ceased after the First World War, Bauman (2000) argues that we are still living and experiencing modernity, but are subject to the continuous fluctuations in its ever changing definitions of what 'modern' is. The expansive time frame of the Modern era encompasses perhaps the biggest changes to the development of human society's functions, beliefs and values. The rapid advancement of rationalism, scientific experiment and industry gave rise to some of the most influential thinkers of our time, allowing for some of the greatest economical, sociological and anthropological works to be postulated and considered up to the present day. However, as the Modern era progressed into the 20th century, the rigid framework on which previous convictions of knowledge and truth was built upon began to loosen, giving way to the exploration of relativism and the possible rejection of positivist methods of explanation. Although still in debate, Bell (1973) and Beck (1986) argue that the Modern era began to fade during the wake of the post-industrial era and the decline of 'Fordism' in the late 1960's. The early 1970's saw a departure from social theories being consumed with themes of capitalism, choosing instead to pay consider movements in society outside of the industrial settings, with the notion of 'culture' becoming seminal in these progressions. Stienmetz (1999, p.1) describes the Cultural Turn (a movement among scholars in the social sciences which examined the ways in which culture influences ontological and epistemological understandings) as a "wide array of new theoretical impulses coming from fields formerly peripheral to the social sciences".

Jameson (1998) comments that during the Cultural Turn importance was placed on art and culture for education and moral growth, and that social criticism and change became more important to teach than linguistics. The shift in emphasis

towards meaning and interpretation placed the social construction of reality at the forefront of this new direction of philosophical thought. The fragmentary and plural character of reality was being championed by many scholars who argued that any ideology or social theory that justified human action as a means to progress or order should be condemned as meaningless. They denied human thought the ability to arrive at any objective account of their reality. The grand social theory or narrative that justified human activity, whether it was Marxism, liberalism or Fascism was no longer credible (Burke, 2000). These new philosophies rejected of any form of universal truths, claiming that the role of all previous knowledge systems were purported to legitimate the power of those who know and deny power to those who do not know. Here marks the beginning of the Postmodern movement.

E.3 Postmodernity

The Postmodern movement has been postulated by countless academics, from a variety of subjects, over a number of years. Whilst many exchange and debate the grand to the intricate of the postmodern revolution within their particular field – theology, music, architecture, sociology to name but a few - a common theme throughout the studies is that the ‘postmodern era’ is exceptionally difficult to define and date. Certainly in sociological terms, the ‘postmodern’ era is far from translucent, and is married to a number of (often conflicting) movements, theorists and texts. The Postmodern movement was an aesthetic, literary, political or social philosophy; cited as a cultural and intellectual phenomenon (Hassan, 1985). The movement appeared to be in complete opposition to the ideas and beliefs held in the early to mid Modern era, characterized by the rejection of objective truth and universalism. Indeed,

Plato maintained that the world of ideas itself is just as real as the world of objects, and that it is through ideas that humanity attains consciousness of the absolute. Postmodernists called into question the notion that all knowledge can be learnt from scientific reasoning and systematic justification and that ideas and policies applied to the masses is usually at a detriment to the individual.

A widely shared view was that there was a growing disintegration of the modern *grands récits*, the Hegelian, Marxist, or Freudian systems, each of which had sought to provide a coherent intellectual framework with which to understand and change the world. Their failure signalled the futility of *any* attempt to construct a master narrative, and could be construed as a liberation from the strait-jacket of totality and authority (Best & Kellner, 1991). The Postmodern posture was therefore to emphasize and enjoy difference(s) without seeking to bring them into unity; to disrupt fixed patterns or hierarchies which might exist or emerge; and to frustrate imperatives or directions which anyone might seek to impose on another. For this reason Kelly (1995) argues the movement is notably resistant to simple summary or definition. Concerned with the social / material bias, situated knowledge's and contingent truth, the Postmodern era produced radical thinking appertaining to the fragmentation of authority and the commoditisation of knowledge.

As is concurrent with each changing era, the works of a noted few intellectuals have come to define the period. Postmodern thought cast questions upon almost all antiquated theories of modern existence, interrogating all previous logics of subjects pertinent to this study; Identity, the body, experience and knowledge. Although Bauman no longer subscribes to the Postmodern rhetoric, his early philosophical and sociological interests, as well as his academic

pursuits were grounded in Postmodern theory. References to the works of Postmodern thinkers are peppered throughout Bauman's earlier works, however, his growing discontent with the assumed markings of Postmodernism led him to depart from his contemporaries and ensue alternative explanations for the changing trends of social actors and social totalities. That being said, Bauman's writings (at the micro and macro level of society) must be accredited to the works of Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida as the origins of his predominant themes.

Michel Foucault was a French philosopher, social critic, and historian whose vast influence extended across a broad array of disciplines, especially in the humanities and social sciences and is widely acknowledged as being one of the most influential, albeit controversial, thinkers of our time (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2010). He is perhaps best known for his ruminations on power, self-identity, epistemology, and the *evolution* of systems of thought and meaning. Foucault questioned the rationality of post-Enlightenment society by focusing on the ways in which many of the 'enlightened' practices of modernity progressively restrict rather than increase the freedom of individuals, thereby perpetuating social relations of inequality and oppression (McNay, 1994). Of special significance for Foucault was the way that knowledge and perception functioned in social hierarchies of power (Barth, 2005). Foucault claims that the rise of rationality should be read as the legitimatising of power rather than a challenge to it and that this collusion of knowledge and power creates institutions of discipline which, under the guise of 'improvement' in reality unites administrative authority, bureaucratic regulation and hegemonic social control (Jones & Porter, 1995). He is often described as post-structuralist or post-modernist, but Foucault himself rejected such titles, preferring to analyse their

significance rather than identify with them (Horrocks & Jevtic, 1997). Foucault began from a relentless hatred of bourgeois society and culture and with a spontaneous sympathy for groups at the margins of the bourgeoisie (artists, homosexuals, prisoners, etc.) (Gutting, 2005). In particular his works examined the pervasive triangulation of power, knowledge and truth in relation to the ethical and moral construct of individual and societal behaviour - deviance, order and sexuality for example – and the subjectivity of that which is deemed omnipotent in the present day. Foucault saw power as “something that is exercised rather than possessed; it is not attached to agents and interests but is incorporated in numerous practices (Barrett, 1991, p.135) Bauman would later refute these views of Foucault, stressing that the heterogeneity of power relations operating within the micro levels of these practices would be subjected to the charisma and reflexivity of social practice, and therefore social agents cannot be ignored when attempting to explain the complexity of power. This being noted, however, Foucault’s views on identity, discourse, discipline and industry can be traced throughout Bauman’s early and present day work.

Stemming from the same cluster of Postmodern French philosophers, Derrida was the founder of “deconstruction,” a process of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also political institutions. One of the most prolific thinkers of the time (Reynolds & Roffe, 2004), he distanced himself from the various philosophical movements and traditions that preceded him on the French intellectual scene (phenomenology, existentialism, and structuralism) to instead produce abstract and exceptionally complex concepts on morality, aporia and difference. Poised in the interstices between philosophy and non-philosophy (or philosophy and literature), Derrida’s work has had an enormous influence in psychology, literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, feminism,

sociology and anthropology (Reynolds et al, 2004). Derrida's strategy of explicating the historical roots of philosophical ideas, questioning the "metaphysics of presence" that he sees as having dominated philosophy since the ancient Greeks, careful textual analysis, and attempting to undermine and subvert the paradoxes themselves has seen his work become a challenge to the unquestioned assumptions of the Western philosophical tradition and Western culture as a whole (Hill, 2007). Whilst wide ranging in discussion, Derrida's writings are the roots of Bauman's themes concerning binary opposites, undecidability and Otherness, with much of his later works drawing on the relevance of these three themes in a liquid modern world.

Whilst the works of Bauman have been analysed in reference to Foucault and Derrida by a number of academics in regards to ethics, power and civility (Kelemen, 2001; Best, 2005; Ryan, 2008; Uzar & Ucma, 2010) this literature review does not intend to compare and contrast the works of these three philosophers, but more to guide an understanding of how Bauman has arrived at his sociological understandings. In concluding on Postmodernism, opinion is still divided, however, on the value of the term and of the phenomenon it purports to describe. Those who most often use it tend to welcome 'the postmodern' as a liberation from the hierarchy of 'high' and 'low' cultures; while sceptics regard the term as a symptom of irresponsible academic euphoria about the glitter of consumerist capitalism and its moral vacuity. It can be seen by the works of Foucault and his peers that postmodern thought introduced notions of human complexity and difference, epistemological relativism and a critique of universalism and essentialism. However, Britton (1988) argues that the movement was an invention of intellectuals in search of a new discourse and source of cultural capitalism. In agreement, Habermas (1981) labels

postmodernism as a conservative ideology attempting to devalue emancipatory modern theories and values. Postmodernism undercuts the foundationalist nature of the Western idea of historical knowledge. It insists that when it is a matter of studying the past, the historian must accept responsibility of for the construction of what previously s/he had pretended only to discover. Whilst the issue of authorship has been addressed previously within the chapter, there are fundamental flaws within the argument that postmodernism presents concerning this problem. Whilst Bevir (1999) draws attention to concern that postmodernism attempts to undercut the entire tradition of Western philosophical contribution to contemporary society, postmodernism is, in fact, parasitic, and cannot live except as a response and re-visitor to its modern predecessors. This is evident when considering Foucault's (often positive) interest in Kant, or Derrida's concern for Husserl. Perhaps the main argument one would present against Postmodernism is the inability for postmodernity to explain itself within its own criteria. Post modernism rests, essentially, on the principle that everything is relative – everything, except, of course, the statement that everything is relative. Postmodernism undercuts itself in its attempt to justify its purpose. According to the intellectuals of the postmodern, the outdated magnum opus of right versus. wrong, man versus. woman, good versus. evil, for example, are all paradigms created by "us" to further our power and oppression. However, it fails to acknowledge the predicament it presents to itself regarding the issues of relative vs. absolute, local discourse vs. totalising narrative and modernity versus. postmodernity. In this argument, postmodernism acts itself (and the intellectuals who expound it) as an oppressor and legislator of power. The story of postmodernity supplanting

modernity is itself a metanarrative, therefore advocates of postmodernity would themselves, in effect, have to reject postmodernity.

Since the mid-1990s, dissatisfaction with postmodernism has prompted a return to modernist themes (Alexander, 1995) and several new approaches to the changing nature of modernity have been proposed. Lee (2006, p.355) suggests these new approaches include 'reflexive modernisation', 'liquid modernity' and 'multiple modernities', arguing that these new approaches do not necessarily suggest a convergence of views in regard to the redefinition of modernity, more that each "connotes a particular response to postmodernism and represents a different vision of what modernity entails". In 2001, Bauman expressed a growing uneasiness with postmodernity as an umbrella term applied to a wide range of social transformations. He believed his proposition of Liquid Modernity to be a more apt term for making sense of changes as well as continuities in modernity (Lee, 2005). Despite being in circulation for almost a decade, Bauman's work still remains on the periphery of social theory and is yet to be fully embraced within sociological academe. At present his work, whilst more known on the continent, is relatively unfamiliar in the UK and is not commonly used in empirical studies of experience, thus allowing for original, advanced and progressive research within with field.

Appendix F

Personal Motivations

F. Personal Motivations

I would like to begin by providing the reader with the opportunity to understand my own personal motivations to undertake this study and dedicate 3 years of my life to this particular area of academia. I was motivated to conduct this research by my interest in philosophical, sociological and anthropological views of identity and the part played by narrative in the evolving self, together with previous professional experience of working with student-athletes, professional sports men and women (both able bodied and disabled) as well as my professional experience of working in Higher Education.

I had never been a particularly sporty child, indeed I spent my adolescent years being short and overweight relative to my peers. It was not until my late teens that I had my growth spurt and morphed into someone almost unrecognizable to my previous identity (at least physically anyway). My family do not participate in sports and as a child I was never encouraged to exercise, be competitive or participate in after school sports clubs, and so I was relatively perplexed when my music teacher suggested, in my final year of secondary school, that I try out for the school basketball team. From that very first training session I was engrossed. Never before had I experienced such aspects of my id – my absolute competitiveness, the euphoria of winning, the sheer innateness of my movements – it was organic and yet immediate. This was it – I had found what it was I was ‘meant’ to do. Sport.

I continued to play basketball throughout my remaining time at school and at a further education college. I began as an unfit, awkward, meek teenager and transformed into a confident, assertive and uplifted individual. Although it was clear that I made a good athlete, sport never became an integral part of my life.

My parents did not have the time (or the inclination) to encourage my sporting ambitions, I worked full time at the weekends, I played 2 instruments which required my attention and school work was always first and foremost. Sport was something I desperately loved and enjoyed, but it was to remain nothing more than a hobby.

Throughout my time at university my dedication to sport began to grow exponentially. My lifestyle became that of a student-athlete. My lifestyle choices, my social circles, my sacrifices and my priorities were all organised around my sport. My life became very different to the lives of my university friends who did not participate in sport. Sport was my comfort, my release, my focus and my role – it became the galvanising element of my identity, but to which I was forever grateful to for making me the person I was becoming. However, I became increasingly aware that despite my dedication, my sporting endeavours stopped at a university level. I was jealous of my elite student-athlete friends who had had sporting families, who had spent summers at sports camps, who had medals and jerseys to prove their talent and had achieved far more than I ever could. I viewed them with a complete conflict of emotion, vacillating between awe, jealousy, respect and discontent. For my 4 years at university I lived on the fringes of their culture, but until I had that elusive Great Britain vest, I could never quite belong.

After finishing university my first job was as a Personal Trainer at a local council run leisure facility. It was here that I was first exposed personally to disability. The Introduction of the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) in 2005 meant all council run facilities required a member of staff to be offered IFI training as a Continuing Professional

Development (CPD) option, in the anticipation of all local government facilities gaining IFI accreditation. Despite not having any previous personal involvement with disability, I enjoyed working with special population groups as a Personal Trainer and wanted to gain more experience with a population I had had no formal training of working with. From there on my interest within disability sport grew as did my career within the elite sporting environment. My first encounter with disability sport was helping a Further Education student of mine train to trial for the England U17 Cerebral Palsy Football Team as a goalkeeper.

Since completing my university degree I have fully dedicated my career objectives to the world of education and elite sport. I have gained a Masters of Science in Human Performance, gained a teaching qualification, taught children from those who have severe learning difficulties to third year graduates at elite universities. I have worked for government sports organisations, for domestic and international sporting National Governing Bodies (NGB's) and have volunteered many hours working with sporting charities. Yet throughout this time, my natural affinity has always laid with two particular groups – the student-athletes and the Paralympic Sports. I have been privileged to meet some extraordinary people over the years, regardless of ability, and have continually been awed by their life stories of determination, sacrifice, willing and diligence. And so, this research project allowed me to amalgamate my passions for sport and education and relay the narratives of the most over looked and underrepresented, yet utterly complex group of individuals – Paralympic student-athletes. At the time of writing I continue to play sport at a high level, rowing at senior club level and dedicating almost 25 hours a week to training and competing.

Appendix G

Reflexivity

G. Reflexivity

The ability to put aside personal feelings and preconceptions is more a function of how reflexive one is rather than how objective one is as it is not possible for researchers to set aside things about which they are not aware (Ahern, 1999). Myerhoff & Ruby (1992, p.307) define reflexivity as “the capacity of any system of signification to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself”. Heidegger advocates the use of reflexivity not as a tool for bracketing off judgement, but also as a tool for encouraging self-understanding and self-acquaintance – a concept central to the production of interpretative phenomenological research, and for a psych-social study such as this.

For a research concept to be psycho-social means it aims to relate to an individual’s psychological development in, and interaction with, a social environment. This particular study examines the articulation of the individual participant’s perceptions of self against three subsections of their social environment (that of university, disability and high performance sport). Knowing this, the research question must depart from a firm platform of understanding of social theory concerning the intersection of the psychological and the sociological. For this, the notion of the Sociological Imagination as developed by C. Wright-Mill’s is discussed.

G.1 The Sociological Imagination

For a researcher engaging in a psycho-social study, the sociological imagination involves a conscious effort to question the obvious, to remove oneself from familiar experiences, and to examine them critically. The purpose

is for the researcher to acquire the ability to see the private experiences and personal difficulties of the participant as entwined with the structural arrangements of society. C. Wright Mills (1959) described the sociological imagination as:

“An awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society, and (...) the ability to view our society as an outsider might, rather than relying only on our individual perspective, which is shaped by our cultural biases” (p.7)

Therefore, the sociological imagination attempts to enable the researcher to position themselves within an alternate social environment to that of their own, and for Wright-Mills neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. A person's perceptions of their lived experiences are linked to the social and historical context in which they are lived, of which I have attempted to understand objectively and integrate into this study. At times, this required my sociological imagination to explore and attempt to understand the concept of social marginality (disability) within the construct of self-identity. Additionally to explore if, when, how and why the participants recognised themselves as being excluded from social activity within any of their social environments. The level at which I therefore engaged my sociological imagination impacted upon my ability to interpret and present the data provided by each participant.

This continuous exploring of the hermeneutic circle of interaction (between myself and the participant, between the participant and their micro society, through to the participant and the macro society) is paramount to this study as it demonstrates the essence of a psycho-social study. Although at both the

individual and the societal levels structuring leads to the imposition of social, cultural and symbolic boundaries, it is at the societal level that the ordering process leads to the establishment of a meta-order, thereby suppressing and excluding any individual or group that comes to symbolize disorder (Marotta, 2002). The multiple tensions between order and disorder are approached with a detailed consideration of perspective which is outlined thoroughly in each chapter where necessary. Harris (2006, p.1) comments that within the research area of sport, “perspectival approach to data collection is required to explore the textual construction of qualitative research accounts”. He also argues that as research moves from the macro to micro theoretical analyses of the social world within the sociology of sport, the need for more ways to tell of the meeting of the psychological and the sociological is increasingly important. This research has addressed this issue.

G.2 Researching and Representing the Other

The notion of Otherness is complex and has a complex history, and whilst Chapter 2 explores at length the issues of marginalization, Otherness and alienation, particularly from a literary perspective, the practical and pragmatic complexities of such issues need to be discussed. Agyeman (2008) comments that:

“Sensitive research should be a journey of discovery in which the researcher becomes ‘sensitised’ to the potential challenges and dilemmas that their chosen topic may hold. When researcher the Other in the role of an outsider, this also means addressing the role of self in research and engaging in critical questioning of one’s own role and scope.” (p.272)

This chapter is explicit in detailing the considerations required for a study with an interpretative approach. As a researcher, the primary difficulty presented in the study is to identify why it is that something is Other. The understandings of my own culture, of my own behaviour and of my own judgements are needed for me to be able to reflect critically on my research. According to Hańderek (2008, p.2), the problem of Otherness lies mainly in diversity, with this diversity being recognised through “the discovery of who we are in confrontation with Otherness”. In regards to research, the issue of Otherness depends on both what is meant by Otherness and how that Otherness is engaged with both by the researcher and the participant. Different epistemologies and methodologies have different approaches to these two issues, emphasizing different forms of Otherness as significant (Fawcett and Hearn, 2004). Fawcett and Hearn (2004) comment that when conducting research, one is not, at least not usually, in only one social relation with the researched. There is not only one existent, dominant or possible form of Otherness. Therefore I must recognise my social relation to the participants as a white, able bodied, female researcher with experience and understanding of disability, of university education and of high performance sport. Despite having shared cultural interests (e.g. socialising with friends) and having had shared experiences (e.g. attending university), I will never experience those experiences in the same way that my participants have and throughout the reflexive process I have continued to note that I am researching the Other.

If research is to provide a voice for a particular group, Aygman (2008) argues that when researching Otherness, it is not the label of the researcher themselves (male; black; disabled for example) rather it is whether the

researcher is writing from the *perspective* of the Other they are researching. However, Fawcett and Hearn (2004) disagree, stating that it is never possible, and is wholly unacceptable, for a researcher to presume they can speak *for* a particular group – even if the researcher is not classed as Other by the participants. Finkelstein (1996) argues that at times, research written from direct experience from a member of the group being researched is at risk of being over-privileged and over sentimentalized. He argues that whilst direct experience is important, that by itself falls short of what is required for sound and serious political analysis. The specific and the general within homogenised groups (Athletes, for example) can still create and foster diversity and division. Considering this, I concur with the latter authors regarding the production of a ‘voice’ in research. In the context of this study, research carried out into disability by a non-disabled researcher cannot on the basis of experience alone be seen to be less legitimate than research carried out into disability by a disabled researcher. It is how the research project is conducted, how the participants are involved, how attention is paid to ethical issues and the extent of critical reflexivity, that have to be regarded as key factors to researching the Other (Fawcett & Hearn, 2008). I aim to demonstrate my understanding of this by investigating the researcher continuum, positions of hierarchy within research and the politics of interpretation.

G.3 The Researcher Continuum

Personal experience as a foundational drive for research is argued to create anxiety and tension. Reinharz (1992, p.261) is concerned that “it violates the conventional expectation that a researcher can be detached, objective and

value-neutral". Traditionally, researchers have been expected to remain objective and value free in the production of truth or the Truth in order to protect and preserve the integrity of research (Harding, 1987). Harding (1987) however insists on the need to avoid the objectivist stance that attempts to make the researcher's cultural beliefs, social understandings and practices invisible. She argues:

"Only in this way can we hope to produce understandings and explanations which are free (or at least more free) of distortion from the unexamined beliefs and behaviours of social scientists themselves". (p.7)

Indeed Bauman puts the point more forcefully when, in conversation with sociologist Keith Tester, he argues: 'the "ethical neutrality" often demanded of sociologists is either hypocrisy or self-delusion.' (Bauman & Tester, 2001, p.45). Smith et al (1999) note that whilst conducting interviews of the phenomenological nature, one is trying to get close to the participant's world, to take, in Conrad's (1987) words, an 'insider's perspective', but they note that one cannot do this directly or completely. IPA argues that access to a participant's perspective relies upon, and is confounded by, the researcher's own conceptions and perspectives of the world they are attempting to investigate. This is when the researcher must recognise the play of double hermeneutics within their research.

It is becoming increasingly important for social and behavioural researchers to clarify their personal motivation for their research, especially for those utilising qualitative methodologies that require reflexivity (Creswell, 1994; Crotty, 1998; Etherington, 2004; Patton, 2002). As a component of clarifying their role in the

research, these researchers often position themselves as either 'insiders' or 'outsiders' to their research domain (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). Generally, insider-researchers are those who chose to study a group to which they belong, while outsider researchers do not belong to the group under study. My personal motivations can be found in Appendix F and it is due to these motivations that I choose to not subscribe to the dichotomy of either / or / insider / outsider, more that my position occupies the space in-between.

Whilst I am not disabled, my involvement with disability sport privileges my understanding of the life of a disabled individual. Although I have not been a student at the universities involved in the study, my personal experience as an able bodied student at university and as a teacher in Higher Education Institutes privileges my understanding of certain societal and educational situations within the academic setting. Finally, my involvement and understanding of high performance sport (both able bodied and disability, as an athlete and as support staff) allows a deeper understanding of the UK sporting landscape and the trappings of the elite athlete lifestyle. I actively took advantage of this and in undertaking the research, I acknowledge that my professional interests have influenced my decision to research the experience of being a Paralympic student-athlete, I further acknowledge that my personal experiences have also influenced the way I chose to research this topic. It is these acknowledgements, experiences and interests which will impact upon the interpretation I give to the narratives produced, and therefore I find it imperative to explicitly discuss my position within the research. In accordance with Elias (1987) I reflexively understand myself as being both part of and yet detached from the worlds of the participants of my study.

Reflective studies require an adherence to a philosophical standpoint, engaging in a reflexive process often seen as narcissistic and navel gazing; the belief that it has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the research and researcher, and the process requires introspection, self-questioning, vulnerability, and humility (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Langhout, 2006). Ellis et al (2000) argue for a continuum for the role of the researcher between 'complete participant' and 'complete observer', of which DeLyser (2001, p.442) agrees as "in every research project we navigate complex and multi-faceted insider-outsider issues". This increase in fluidity of the researcher position within and between research projects encompasses and recognises the possible changes a researcher may undergo in terms of their locality within the research group both in one project but also throughout their research career. In the context of my study, where I positioned myself as neither an insider nor an outsider to the life experience being explored, I agree with social and behavioural researchers who argue that the role of the researcher is better conceptualised on a continuum, rather than as an either/or dichotomy.

G.4 Developing a Non-Hierarchical Relationship

Having established my position as a researcher, it was important that I position myself within the interview, and consciously establish a non-hierarchical relationship between myself and the participant. However, as Stone and Priestly (1996) put forward, important methodological questions are raised by the act of researching disablement. They comment that there is:

“(...) an inherent power relationship between researcher and researched which is accentuated by the unequal power relationship which exists between disabled people and non-disabled people in the wider world.” (p.700)

There are a number of criticisms put forward regarding the power balance between an able-bodied researcher and a disabled participant, highlighting that the anti-oppressive practices must begin with the research process itself. The theoretical approach taken towards the interviews was that of Feminism. In feminist interviewing, researchers make a concerted effort to reduce the hierarchy of the interviewer–interviewee relationship by engaging in mutual dialogue and disclosure (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1983). Oakley (1988) encouraged feminist researchers to give more control to their participants over the environment and direction of the interview, whilst Campbell et al (2010) state that interviewers should not just ask questions, but answer them as well to share back with participants, which helps equalize the power imbalance by letting participants see into the world of the researcher, both personally and professionally.

Even though I had not assumed a position of power drawn from my own conceptions of the interview process, it was important from the beginning that any potential signs of hierarchy be reversed. For example, these signs could include the visual (such as Great Britain or National Governing Body branded clothing), verbal language (ensuring the appropriate level, use and delivery of vocabulary), being aware of body language which could be interpreted as negative or dismissive by the participant or by making them feel like a ‘subject’ rather than as a participant or consultant to the study. This was achieved by encouraging the participants to ask questions regarding the research, my

background, my personal interests and pursuits should they wish to do so. Proponents of the social model of disability (Oliver, 1992; Zarb, 1992) argue that the disabled population must be active doers of research, rather than passive subjects, and that research cannot be value free (Barnes, 1996). I felt it appropriate within the context of this study to answer any questions and express my comments on their responses to make each participant feel more engaged in the research process and help promote an egalitarian situation. However as Campbell et al (2010) comment, whether participants benefit from such engagement merits further empirical evaluation.

Oliver (1992) comments that disabled people have come to see research as a violation of their experience, as irrelevant to their needs and as failing to improve their material circumstances and quality of life. This is also argued by Klitchen (2000) concerning the need for emancipatory and empowering research strategies within disability research. One major critique is that the majority of disability research is grounded in experiences of oppression (Stone et al, 1996). As the primary researcher, I believe that this study does not subscribe to this criticism. A great deal of disability scholarship focuses on oppressive experiences in the lives of the participants and their social and cultural isolation and so every attempt was made by myself through every stage of the study to 'normalise' the experiences of the participants. Gorelick (1996, p.27) noted that interactions such as reaffirming language, touch when appropriate and engaging in the participant's emotions throughout the research help reveal "the pathology of the normal". The conceptual framework of liquid modernity allows for the discussion of a variety of social conditions which could lead to an individual experiencing oppression – the physicality of disability is not

the axial concern of this study and the study does not purposefully interrogate any possible oppression felt by the participants due to their impairment. It is the metaphor of liquid modernity (and its associated metaphors) that most informs this study, not an absolute investigation of the physical and social barriers to the disabled population (although these are spoken about in the narratives produced).

Abberley (1987) argues that many disabled people have concluded that disability research has at best marginalized and at worst exacerbated the experience of disabled people due to socially constructed and culturally produced attitudes (Oliver, 1990). This study aims to make the (albeit small) sample of the Paralympic student-athlete more inclusive into the literature of the 'student-athlete' by providing rich, detailed and contextualised data about the lived experiences of a group of individuals who are grossly under-represented in research pertaining to the sociology of sport. Qualitative literature available concerning the British student-athlete is scarce and whilst disability remains an important variable within the study, the phenomenon of disability itself is not being investigated, more the phenomenon of being a student-athlete with a disability. This places the research firmly in the area of the sociology of sport.

It should be noted that a large proportion of disability research and the ethics concerning the non-disabled researcher and the disabled participant are written in reference to participants who may not be able to provide informed consent. Despite this not being the case for the participants in this study, the required reading around this issue has made me sensitive to the issues and concerns involved and has provided me with greater knowledge and a deeper

understanding of conducting research within the disabled community. Whilst collecting data and engaging with my participants I quickly realised that the majority of the network of disabled individuals I have worked with have had physical difficulties and that I have only worked with a small number of people with cognitive impairments. Although I believe I have a solid understanding of both physical and cognitive disability and the cultural and social connotations that come with the conditions of disability (in as much as an able bodied person can have), this realisation made me challenge my ability to be able to conduct research with individuals who perhaps cannot engage with me at a particular verbal, intellectual or emotional level. This then led me to read around ethical and methodology challenges concerning 'gatekeepers' and, further, the conditions of interpretation and the acceptance of the production of truth and knowledge when researching and representing the Other. The associated reading concerning conducting research with in the very broad spectrum of disability has encouraged me to assess my ability as a researcher and to appreciate the vast ontological, epistemological, philosophical, sociological and methodological considerations required within the field of disability research.

Reflection on one's research is a long term process and I think I will continue to reflect on the notion of the hierarchical researcher position for some time. The disability literature detailed the importance of ensuring an egalitarian interview situation (Barns & Mercer, 1997; Kitchin, 2000; Shakespeare, 1996a; Stone & Priestly, 1996) and so much time was spent preparing for this particular potentiality. However, being actively involved as a practitioner in disability sport I did not feel that I would enter the interview with any assumed authority – I was not the expert on the participant's life, they were. I do not subscribe to believing

that because I am able bodied I hold a wider regard for myself when engaging with an individual with an impairment simply because that is considered (by the disabled community at least, according to the literature) to be the reflection of the views of contemporary society. Whether or not the participants shared this view is discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. By attempting to ensure an interview setting of equality I had effectively already *assumed* that my participant would automatically feel inferior due to my able-bodiedness, which was incorrect of me. I do not know if my participants assumed a hierarchical role as the interviewee (hierarchical in that they have the knowledge that I do not have but am seeking from them) and neither do I know if they felt that I would assume an authoritative position during the interview – these were questions that were not asked. However, upon reflecting on the responses from the participants once the interviews had finished (see 3.7.5) I am inclined to think that the participants did not view me as believing I had an assumed hierarchical role over them during the interviews.

G.5 The Politics of Interpretation

As argued above, the reduction of hierarchical relations and power between the researcher and the researched could be achieved by the researcher's conscious effort to create an egalitarian atmosphere. However, the imbalance of power still remains on the level of the interpretation of the interviews as making sense of narratives in the researchers final written text is ultimately an interpretative and power laden activity (Ang, 1996; Sangster, 1994).

When collecting either qualitative or quantitative data, it can never truly be separated from interpretation, which according to Ang (1996) cannot but lead to a politicised conception of performing research:

“It is not the search for (objective, scientific) Truth in which the researcher is engaged, but the construction of interpretations, in certain ways of understanding the world always historically located, subjective and relative (p.46)

Therefore, if interpretation is profoundly and inevitably concerned with constructing methods of ways of understanding the world it can never be objective, neutral, value-free or merely descriptive. The ‘empirical’ findings captured in either quantitative or qualitative form do not yield self-evident meanings; it is through an interpretative process by the researcher that ‘empirical’ findings become meaningful and understood (Sangster, 1994). Consequently, what is revealed is the thoroughly political nature of any research practice; that is “what is at stake is a *politics of interpretation*” (Ang, 1996, pp.46). Pratt (1986, pp.52) observes that “interpretations are always there in multiplicity” because each individual (with their own unique social construction of reality) produces interpretations that differ from those of others. Interpretations, therefore imply a power struggle and, as identified by Pratt (1986, p.52) “to advance an interpretation is to insert it into a network of power relations”.

Throughout the research process I had every intention of allowing the participants to express their personal experiences and perceptions and to document them as truthfully and accurately as possible, and whilst every effort was made to minimise the exercise of power that ultimately comes with interpretation, my position and privilege as the researcher was in every attempt

recognised throughout. During the construction of the interview questions, and during the data collection I consciously and constantly endeavoured to reduce any influence of power my interpretations of their narratives might have had on how each participant expressed their lived experiences. This was achieved during the interview by providing prompts which used unbiased language with the intention to explore deeper the points that were being made. When prompting for more information I would pose a question which could lead the dialogue in the direction the participant chose and avoided using personal experiences as prompts which could influence discussion. When transcribing the interviews, each was transcribed verbatim with individual idiosyncrasies recorded in the script (e.g. laughs, pauses, head movements, hand gestures etc) to maintain the authenticity of the participants narrative in its physical context. Additionally, when analysing the narratives using IPA I maintained a focus on asking myself why it was that I was interpreting the text in a particular way and attempted to identify, understand and address any interpretations which may have resulted in an influence of power over the narratives.

G.6 Trustworthiness

Throughout the research I have drawn on the reflexive notes of Mawyer (2005) as to the credibility to conduct research as a socially and culturally privileged white abled bodied individual within the area of disability studies. Disability is a narrative of being human: all human beings are touched immediately, if not by disability itself then, then by its *potential*. For illness and injury (from sport or otherwise) are themselves inevitable and unpredictable disabling consequences

of being human. To this end then disability studies is not, indeed must not, be the private property of the disabled community.

To conclude on reflexivity, the relationship between the knower and the known is made less obscure and perhaps safer when researchers practice reflexivity and take steps to ensure that ethical consideration is given to their participants' needs. As Nespor & Barber (1995, p.53) succinctly put it, "No one is detached or 'neutral'" and, as Pinar (1988, p.150) has argued, "Understanding of self is not narcissism; it is a precondition and concomitant condition to the understanding of others". As was articulated by Dewey (1938, cited in Chitpin & Simon, 2009, p.78) "We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience".

The need for reflexivity in this study has been invaluable to not only improve myself as a research, but to improve the quality of the research I have produced.

Appendix H

Examples of the method of analysis

H.1 Initial note taking

The below image is an extract from Beth's interview, demonstrating Step 2 of the initial level of analysis.

- 1 Name: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ BETH
- 2 Sport: Sailing – Single handed 2.4m
- 3 NGB: Royal Yachting Association
- 4 Age: 21
- 5 Para: Class 7
- 6 Dis: Complex Regional Pain Syndrome & Fixed Dystonia
- 7 Uni: Manchester
- 8 Degree: 1st year Speech and Language Therapy
- 9
- 10 NC:
- 11 So I'd like to start by talking to you about your sport. Can you tell me how you first got involved in
- 12 sailing?
- 13 BH:
- 14 Um well, before I was in the chair I was really really sporty so it was kinda ... um ... we' I kinda
- 15 developed the condition and, um, like over sort of a year. I gradually got worse and had to move into
- 16 the chair so I had to move school, and the school I went to it was like a mainstream school but it had
- 17 a base for people with special needs, um so I went there and like the head of the resource base had
- 18 just set up Bristol Sailability and he was like 'oh come along' and I was like 'ok I'll try it out' and he
- 19 stuck me in a boat and ... and these boats are like adapted so you can't capsize or anything, and it
- 20 was just like incredible really, coz like for so long um there was um just so much uncertainty with
- 21 what was going to happen and what I was going to be like and like I got quite ill so it was like all my
- 22 independence had been taken away from me and I'd gone from being you know just like normal
- 23 teenager and it was great to just be on the water it was like 'oh I can go where I want and I can do
- 24 what I want' and yeah it was like 'wow I can do a sport again' ... well I'd don't like wheelchair
- 25 basketball and that but it just didn't really, like I didn't match up to it and stuff, um but yeah so
- 26 that's how it started.
- 27 NC:
- 28 What sports had you done previously then?
- 29 BH:
- 30 Um well I'd played golf for the county, um hockey, basketball, swimming for the school ... um tennis
- 31 ... um and badminton. Very sporty - had beginnings of athlete ID early on. Illness stole this from her.

Emerging themes Beth

1. **P1 L14:** Self ID – chair is not part of her, ‘the chair’, objectifies it.
2. **P1 L14:** Past ID – positive sport experience as child, identified with sport as part of herself.
3. **P1 L15:** Transitional person – ‘*slow process*’ to move into chair, saw it as part of her illness not that she was disabled.
4. **P1 L17:** Meaning making – ‘special needs’ school, physically deteriorating but her mind was fine. Did she experience herself as ‘special needs’?
5. **P1 L19:** Safety – cannot capsize so takes the fear out, an experience of mobility and freedom with complete security – oxymoron? Contradiction? Complete freedom with complete physical security.
6. **P1 L20:** Illness – personal insecurity and uncertainty about her health. LM condition of uncertainty different to this, very personal, self-experience of her health, for BH uncertainty is real, physical, manifested in her body.
7. **P1 L21:** Transition – knew it was coming and that she would change (unlike CM), had time to prepare, stolen physical life, loss of who she could have become ‘*independence taken away*’. Look at difficulties experienced for becoming dis CM, HC...
8. **P1 L23:** LM condition – ‘can go anywhere’ loss of mobility means loss of freedom. Sailing gives her feeling of freedom, movement mobility – something lost from her body.
9. **P1 L24:** Past life – to do sport again reminds her of her past self, reminds her of experiences pre illness.
10. **P1 L31:** Athlete ID – very sporty childhood, had beginnings of athlete ID early on, illness stole this from her.
11. **P2 L38:** Past life – coming back to herself, reliving past experiences, mournful of the sport life she lost, feels like her old self.
12. **P2 L44:** Solid sport – rules of dis sport created exclusion for her type of dis, even dis sport it not all inclusive.
13. **P2 L47:** Belonging – enjoyed being around able bodied, reminded her of how she felt, how she saw herself ‘fitted in’, a sport where dis is removed on the water, everyone can do it together.

14. **P2 L54:** ID – illness at 13yrs old, difficult time, when start to establish self ID and understand a how to create your ID.
15. **P2 L55:** Illness – huge impact on life, illness caused her dis, so perhaps not seen as 'lacking' what is the difference between seeing yourself as ill and seeing yourself as disabled?
16. **P2 L58:** Hope – important to maintain this, maintain normality, escape, maintain a sense of who she was before.

H.2 Example Table of analysis

The below table is an extract from the document produced for Beth's subordinate themes. The table demonstrates simultaneously how subordinate and higher order themes were recognised via the steps of analysis as indicated by Smith et al (2009).

Higher Order	Comments	Descriptive	Contextual	Used
Illness	P1 L14: Self ID – chair is not part of her, 'the chair', objectifies it.	Disability	Present self	
	P1 L14: Past ID – positive sport experience as child, identified with sport as part of herself.	Athletic	Past self athlete ID	X
	P1 L31: Athlete ID – very sporty childhood, had beginnings of athlete ID early on, illness stole this from her.	Athletic	Past self athlete ID	X
	P2 L54: ID – illness at 13yrs old, difficult time, when start to establish self ID and understand a how to create your ID.	Social	Stolen ID	
	P25 L772: Lost life – lost education lost 4 years of adolescent life, grieves for that life?	Social / Academic	Lost life	X
	P25 L776: Understanding of herself was based on her condition and sailing – only 2 things she knew.	Social / Academic	Lost life	X
	P30 L926: Belonging / otherness – 4 year gap without social time, in hospital, very difficult to feel connection, belonging to friendship groups. Adds to difficulty making new friends.	Social	Lost life	X

Appendix I

About the participants: Contextualising the interview environments

Amy

Amy is a 23 year old swimmer and having been to the 2004 and 2008 Paralympic Games, and was in line for be selected for the 2012 London Paralympic Games at the time of interview, she was by far the most decorated and 'elite' of all the participants. Dressed in GB Swimming attire, Amy met me in a private room in the library of the high performance sport university she had graduated from 12 months previously. In earlier discussions with Amy she had told me that we were going to be meeting in between her training sessions and that she would only be able to talk to me for about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Amy's condition (Amelia) meant that she was born without a forearm. She came across a very confident young woman, and seemed much older than her 23 years, however I did not find her as open and forthcoming in her responses as some of the other participants. She spoke frankly and with an almost professionalism about her. I was conscious that with Amy being a regularly featured athlete in the media, being a motivational speaker and being involved in elite level sport for such a long period of time that the interview might involve more media trained responses rather than personal and genuine disclosures. She was a tough participant to interview and not as forthcoming as others had been. There were glimpse of this at times, however I felt I would have liked more time with Amy to help soften the interview, deepen our rapport and draw out some of Amy's more individual and intimate considerations to the questions asked.

Amy learnt to swim at 5 years old and began to swim at national level at 12 years old, competing in her first Paralympic Games at the age of 16 years. After the Games Amy moved to a high performance sport boarding school to

focus on swimming, going on to study for an undergraduate degree at a high performance sports university. Having graduated 12 months previous to the interview, Amy was now a full time athlete.

Amy's interview was short by comparison to other interviews. Quite often she would lead the direction of the conversation to areas of the subject she felt were important for her to discuss in general and perhaps not about her own honest experience. Despite the (at times) lack of personal insight into Amy's life-worlds, there seemed to be an occurring discourse about how Amy experienced herself as different. This difference appeared to be twofold – the difference of being disabled in elite sport and the difference of being an elite athlete at university. Additionally, Amy provided a great insight into her world as an elite level athlete and the difficulties she encounters from choosing this lifestyle.

James

James had graduated university 12 months earlier to my meeting him. James had attended a high performance sport university; however he had not chosen this university based on its sporting credentials, as at the time his athletic ambitions were relatively amateur. After graduating he moved to live and train in another city, having access to the world class facilities at a nearby university. Having graduated in Occupational Therapy, James supported his sporting career by working 30 hours per week in a role related to his degree. In addition James was training up to 30 hours per week.

James had booked a private athlete consultation room for the interview. He was going straight to work after meeting me and so he arrived dressed in smart-casual attire. Knowing that James was a long distance track athlete, I had anticipated his physique – long, lean, defined. Yet James looked tired and perhaps slightly thinner than I expected. His appearance did not match his overall demeanour though. He was chatty, relaxed, friendly and keen to talk with me. In fact James was one of my longer interviews of over 2.5 hours, providing some of the lengthiest answers to questions asked. His congenital condition of Amelia was not immediately obvious. Whereas another participant with the same condition had her sleeve rolled up to actively demonstrate she was missing the lower part of her arm, James had his covered up with a jumper. I admit that I was embarrassed when I went to shake his right hand and found only to find that there was no hand ready to greet mine. He laughed and apologised for not telling me which was his affected arm.

James was pensive, reflective and exceptionally open during his interview, seemingly happy to talk at length about the delights and difficulties he experienced in his childhood, at university and also on his quest to become a

Paralympic athlete. I felt James his was the most transparent in his answers in terms of how his life-worlds were experienced, but James himself was a complex individual to break down and dissect. As will be discussed, James' account of his life is filled with tension, loss and struggle.

Emily

I met Emily after her afternoon swimming practice in an athlete consultation room at the high performance sport university she was attending. In her second year of university and studying Geography, Emily was surprisingly alert for someone who had just finished their second workout of the day. Her bright blonde hair was wet, her bag dwarfed her tiny frame and she wore slippers, green jeans and hooded jumper. Being born with the condition Osteogenesis Imperfecta, Emily was of a very slight stature, with little musculature and a curved spine. She resembled a human Bambi rather than a potential 2012 Paralympic athlete. However, her brash attitude and chatterbox voice quickly put my first impression judgements to bed.

Emily and I talked for nearly two hours. She was bubbly; seemingly honest and unassuming. Emily did not seem too far removed from how I would consider a 'typical' 19 year old female university student – her conversations filled with anecdotes of booze, boys and 'bitching', the occasional studying and an all-embracing attitude to what lay before her. Emily made it clear that she had chosen her university based on its ability to contribute to her swimming career. As a British World Record holder and having attended European and International swimming gala's, participating at the 2012 London Games was the next, and final goal, on her 4 year plan. I found Emily to be very easy to talk to – she seemed to listen to my questions just as much as I listened to her answers. As she spoke about her experiences she did it unreservedly and with depth and expression. When we spoke about swimming she would stay on the topic of swimming, and equally university life was about university life – she never appeared to have any kind of agenda or propensity to steer the conversation in a particular direction or layer it with a particular focus. Emily did

not seem to spend too much time pulling her life apart and examining it. This made me consider Emily's words to be a very accurate reflection of how she experienced her life. Rarely did she consider things from other perspectives nor attempt to be politically correct about situations. By all accounts she was not philosophical about her life – her life was her life and she was enjoying it and it was as simple as that.

Emily was attending one of the top ranking universities in the country for sport and for her chosen academic subject. As we spoke I realised that Emily was very aware of herself; her image, her roles, her surroundings and her choices. Emily seemed to be quite conscious about living in a liquid modern world – and was very much living in the here and now.

Katy

Katy was in her first year at a high performance sport university. She had been participating in Equestrian events since she was a child and had been on the Paralympic Performance pathway for 2 years. Katy had won a variety of national and international Dressage events and was in the process of selection for the London 2012 Paralympic Games. The interview, by comparison to others was short at 1.5 hours. Wrapped up in boots, leggings, jumpers and a coat, Katy met me in the library reception and we headed to the private study room she had arranged for us.

It was obvious when I met Katy that she was the person I was meeting. In earlier correspondence with Katy she had informed me that she had been born with Turner syndrome; a condition affecting the chromosomes which brings with it a variety of physical and cognitive abnormalities, with the most visual abnormality being that of a very short stature, webbed neck and low set ears. Perhaps had I not researched Katy's condition prior to meeting her I would not have immediately thought that the girl in the reception was the girl I was meeting, but having that information meant that I already had a pre-conceived idea of what she might look like. My first thought of Katy was that she was slightly timid, nervous almost, yet she reassured me that she was calm and relaxed and looking forward to the interview. The account Katy provided me with of her life-worlds led me to believe that how Katy was with me was not the result or reflection of our rapport, simply that who Katy was with me seemed to align quite well with who Katy was a person; careful, cautious, apprehensive – characteristics I would not necessarily expect from a student-athlete.

I did not find it difficult to encourage Katy to talk about her life, more that she found it difficult to talk about her life in such detail. I did not get the impression

that she did not tell me much because she did not want to or did not feel comfortable wanting to talk, more that she simply did not consider that she had that much to say. As aforementioned, it became apparent that reflecting on her current situations and considering the possibilities of the path of life different to the one she seemed so set to follow was a difficult task for her.

Helen

I met Helen on winter morning at her home in her university town. Whilst walking to her front door I remember thinking how difficult it must be to be in a wheelchair on mornings like today when it is icy, blisteringly cold, contending with pavements covered in snow. Helen lived in an accessible house with 4 other students from the same non high performance sport university where she was in her first year of university. Helen was 18 years old and had been playing wheelchair Table Tennis since she was 12 years old. She had represented Great Britain at the 2010 Commonwealth Games and was hoping to gain a spot at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Helen's condition of Juvenile Arthritis meant it was possible that she might become quickly fatigued during the interview and additional complications accompanying her condition could also result in random episodes of intense pain. Despite this, Helen was motivated to talk about her life for as long as possible and we talked for just under 2 ½ hours. Helen was frank in her responses, being straightforward, transparent and honest at all times. I felt she spoke with no agenda and made no attempt to guess what it was I might want to hear.

Helen was born an able bodied child but developed Juvenile Arthritis at 8 years old. The complications associated with her condition left her in a coma for a number of weeks with a slim chance of survival. At the time of conducting the interview Helen had only been an undergraduate student for 4 months and so her experience of being a student was perhaps more limited than the experiences of other participants who were in their second or third year of university or from those who had already graduated. I thought it was important

to take this into consideration because for Helen, being a university student was a still a new yet relatively unknown experience.

Helen's words were strong, uncompromising and forthright. She had an aggressive spark about her, a fiery nature. She struck me as every inch the competitive athlete. We discussed many aspects of Helen's life yet she stayed mainly to her experiences of having a disability and her experiences of being an athlete. At times Helen would get quite animated when explaining situations to me, demonstrating her frustration at the attitudes of others towards her and towards themselves. I consider the main, overarching theme to be that Helen experiences her life as a battle, yet fuelling this battle are many contributing subordinate themes concerning her rejection of the disabled community, her fight to prove her worth (both on and off the table) and her need to demonstrate she was a 'normal' student.

Robert

I met Robert in his departmental building at the high performance sport university he had attended for 5 years. Robert had been an undergraduate and masters student at this university and at the time of the interview was in his second year of studying for a PhD in Pure Mathematics. Robert suffered Retinoblastoma as a baby and has been completely blind since. He had been a member of the Great Britain Blind Football team for 2 years. I met him in the reception of the building and he led me to a room which he had booked out. As we walked up the stairs I could see his lips moving faintly, counting the number of steps on the staircase, his fingers lightly tracing the wall along the corridor until we arrived at the door he was looking for. The room numbers were not written in braille and so he asked me to check that we were at the correct room. We were.

Robert was 23 years old and had played sport as a teenager but his interest in it began to lessen as his interest in socialising grew. He spent his undergraduate years and part of his postgraduate year playing sport recreationally but not to any great level. A chance meeting with a member of the GB Blind Football team at his university led to Robert becoming one of GB's top players in a short space of time. With the London 2012 Paralympic Games only 6 months away Robert was finding it hard to concentrate on anything other than the required preparation and the event. If selected, it would be his first Paralympic Games and he was finding the experience of such high performance sport all-consuming, and at times overwhelming.

When Robert and I met he was lugging around his training bag, a laptop bag and was dressed in trainers, jeans and a hooded jumper. He came across as a confident, calm and unassuming. I got the impression he enjoyed talking about

himself, predominantly in the way that perhaps he had not necessarily had the opportunity to discuss himself and reflect on his life at such great length before. I found Robert to be very forthcoming about how he experienced himself, and how he experienced others in his life. I felt he spoke to me in a way he would speak to a friend – he seemed relaxed, humorous and natural, although perhaps slightly cavalier at times.

Chris

At 28 years old, Chris was the oldest of the participants. We had arranged to meet at his local library where he had booked a private room for us to talk. What struck me first and foremost when I met Chris, a wheelchair fencer, was that he did not use a wheelchair, nor did he use any form of apparatus to aid his mobility. He was tall with an athletic frame, wearing jeans and a thick winter jumper. However, Chris' difference was immediate – the left side of his face displayed the signs of moderate to severe palsy, but from his chest down his body showed no obvious signs of physical difference or difficulty. The interview with Chris lasted approximately 2 hours. I found him to be engaging, interested, candid and honest. He answered questions with thought and emotion, often with little prompting from myself to explain his position further. Throughout the interview I felt like Chris had never really been given the opportunity to speak in such lengths about his journey to becoming an Paralympic student-athlete. I feel that this is what is at the heart of Chris' interview – his journey.

Chris was told of his brain tumour 2 weeks before his 19th birthday during a medical examination for entry to the Royal Air Force. The surgery on his brain left him with issues pertaining to his balance, paralysis to his left arm and left leg, and palsy in his face. Chris attempted his undergraduate degree 3 times. The first two times were at a non-high performance sport university where he studied two different degree subjects but failed to complete the first year of either. The third time was at a different non-high performance university where Chris successfully completed a 2 year undergraduate programme. When Chris and I met he was nearing the end of a 1 year Post Graduate Diploma at a non-high performance sport university different to his undergraduate universities.

Chris' interview, his reflections on his life-worlds and his efforts to become Paralympic student-athlete was a very personal journey, bringing with it both psychological and sociological consequences. Although disjointed at times, there was a clear account of who Chris was and how he had planned his life before his tumour was discovered, and in addition, how he and his life changed afterwards.

Beth

Beth was in her first year at a high performance sport university, however as a Para-Sailor, her main training centre was quite a distance from her. Beth had made me aware of her condition before we met and so when I met with her at her university library I was immediately aware of who she was when she came through the doors. Beth suffered from Complex Regional Pain Syndrome with accompanying fixed dystonia to her leg. She was in a motorised wheelchair with her leg fixed out at 90 degrees in front of her. As we made our way to the private study room for the interview I asked Beth if she wanted me to open doors for her along the way. She politely declined and said that we she knew the route with the automatic doors. I could not help but pay attention to the manner in which Beth had to carefully manoeuvre around the many obstacles in the library, being cautious of hitting her leg on anything.

When we arrived at the study room I took a moment to fully recognise Beth and how I felt about meeting her. She looked tiny and frail, her hands thin and translucent. She spoke softly and was wrapped up head to toe in woolly clothing and blankets. I wondered how someone as small as Beth could manage to manoeuvre a huge boat in the ocean, contending with the elements via a small pulley system of ropes and belts. As I was soon to find out, Beth had not only mastered sailing her own boat, she also taught beginner classes to able bodied individuals as well as other disabled sailors. In terms of physical mobility, Beth was by far the most severely disabled participant. Perhaps what set Beth apart was that her acquired disability was the result of a very rare, complex, contentious and changeable illness.

What surprised me most about Beth was the outlook and attitude towards her life which she openly offered. Beth talked at length about the immense difficulties she has had, and will continue to have, as a result of her illness. She spoke calmly, with a docile manner and a friendly tone. She seemed happy. As will be seen in the themes presented, Beth's understanding of her current life situation was one of gratitude and contemplation. Beth came so close to dying – numerous times, and may still again – her account reflected that every day was a blessing for Beth. Her appreciation for her life was a constant throughout her entire account.

Appendix J

Summary of Participant Themes

Table 2: Summary of participant themes

Participant	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7
Amy	Struggling to identify with the image of 'disabled'	An Elite athlete (arm or no arm)	Not that 'kind' of person	Life in the 'real world'	Proving them wrong	Other both in and out of the pool	An Elite Other-athlete
James	The discontent with disability	See me as a proper, decent athlete	A far less than hoped for university experience	There was no 'connection'	I don't really see myself as anything at the moment		
Emily	Not just an athlete	Sometimes it's good to be different	The visual representation of Otherness	Otherness as a cultural creation	'Disability' is a slippery slope	This is where I should be, this is me	
Katy	Para-Dressage rider, not Paralympic Athlete	It's a condition, not a disability	A normal person but not a normal student	A solid person in a liquid world			
Helen	A life not wasted	If you're not born with it your entire life changes	A disability is not an excuse	A relatively normal student	You have to earn it		
Robert	Intelligence is the difference	An Athlete-Student not a Student-Athlete	'Disability' does my head in	A 'normal' student (until football came along)	Alcohol, mates and not being a burden	Understanding the creation of difference	
Chris	The Loss of 'Chris'	Reborn as a Paralympic athlete	From Otherness to 'back on track'	Facing up to it	The chair is just equipment	My worst is my worse – it's all relative	
Beth	The uncertainty of illness	On disability: Brain Vs Body dichotomy	University as giving direction	Is it me or is it them?	The reactions of others	Better sailing, better body	Happy to see another day

Appendix K

Pilot Interview: Katy

Katy

About Katy

Katy was an 18 year old Para-Equestrian rider and was in her first year studying at a high performance sports university. A keen able bodied rider, Katy was diagnosed with Turner Syndrome at 12 years old and began competing in Para-Equestrian events at age 14.

Theme 1: Para-Dressage rider, not Paralympic Athlete

Katy's identity as an athlete was difficult to determine. Wearing her first Great Britain vest at the age of 15, Katy recognised that by definition she was an elite level athlete, however she did not identify herself as one.

"No – I just don't feel like one (...) it feels like something that's for the Olympics or something, it's just not like, like I'm nothing, nothing really" (Pg 8, Ln 205)

This extract uncovers more than Katy simply revealing that she did not identify with her own ideas of an elite athlete, it provides insight as to how Katy considers her disability and sheds light on her self-esteem. Whilst both these issues are developed and discussed later on, I feel it necessary to draw attention to the concern that when Katy is asked about being an elite level athlete she relates the status of elite to the 'Olympics' as opposed to the Paralympics and additionally feels like she has to comment that she is 'nothing' when it comes to her status in her sport. I interpret these themes of rejection of disability and refrain to be carried throughout the interview.

Katy's account of her life as a hopeful Paralympic student-athlete was laced with smaller, intricate lines of how being a Dressage competitor was much more than being an athlete to her. The sport seemed to encompass her personality and her very sense of self. Katy did not seem to be chasing the aspiration of being a gold medal winning Paralympic athlete; rather she spoke of her ambitions of simply being a good rider and a successful student. Quite often Katy would present an image of herself as a focused athlete:

"I mean it means everything. Everything." (Pg 6, Ln 149)
"I've put my heart and soul into it" (Pg 8, Ln 218)

Yet she would interject these few lines of athletic talk with concerns which seemed far removed from that of an aspiring gold medal athlete.

"(...) I've had so much for the time money and effort spent, on me riding, that anyone could have, like I see it that if you've been given this much support at anything then you should do well" (Pg 8, Ln 216)

Katy did not recognise her own abilities as an athlete, rather she contested that 'anyone' could be an elite athlete with the correct support. The issue Katy appeared to be facing was that despite her seemingly fulfilling the role of a Paralympic athlete in regards to her sporting success, she seemed to be lacking the undefinable, illusive quality that turns a good sportsman into an elite athlete. As the interview progressed I began to wonder if Equestrianism was simply a hobby for Katy, but a hobby she happened to be good at; that she did not intentionally seek the Paralympic path.

“Hopefully this year I’ll get selected to go abroad to maybe bigger you now 3 star competitions (...) maybe then I’ll feel like [laughs] I’ll be an elite athlete” (Pg 9, Ln 224)

I consider this extract to demonstrate Katy’s modesty (perhaps even low self-esteem) when it came to her sporting credentials, almost as if Katy required confirmation from competing at a 3 star event that she is a good enough rider. I interpret this statement to reflect Katy rationalising and internalising the label of being ‘elite’, that her athlete identity was too weak to feel worthy of such a title of ‘elite’.

It became obvious throughout the interview that what mattered to Katy most was the riding itself, not the peripheral trimmings of medals, kit and titles.

“I feel like if I didn’t ride, if I didn’t compete like that, then <pause> I’m not, like I said, a typical athlete <pause> I don’t think I’d choose to do another sport” (Pg 21, Ln 549)

Katy recognised that she does not consider herself an athlete. Instead she spoke of riding as a release, a therapy almost that allowed her to escape from any troubles she faced. I felt that for Katy being a rider was more important than being an athlete. Riding was her identity, not being Paralympic athlete.

“I can’t ever imagine not, not doing it, and I know everyone will say that but like I think even if I wasn’t competitive I’d still ride” (Pg 4, Ln 95)

“I ride <pause> and that’s what keeps me sane (...) that’s how I cope with everything” (Pg 21, Ln 564)

I felt Katy had very little connection with the Paralympic Games. Katy did not appear to provide a convincing argument about her athlete identity, despite her

attempts at drawing attention to the importance of it to her. I became most convinced of this when Katy acknowledged that she had no idea that the London 2012 Paralympic Games were to be broadcast on Channel 4 instead of on the BBC.

Me: "And how do you feel about the rights of the Paralympics being sold from the BBC to Channel 4?"

Katy: "Have they? [laughs]" (Pg 13, Ln 340)

Out of all the student-athletes interviewed, Katy was the only one who was unaware of this historical move in broadcasting. Rightly or wrongly, I had assumed that anyone involved in Paralympic sport to some degree would be aware of the debates, implications and attention placed on such a move as to having a commercialised channel broadcast the Paralympic Games. To think that Katy was unaware of this only a few months before the Games were to begin highlighted to me the extent to which Katy did not have an athlete identity.

I believe Katy struggled to adopt her athlete identity because she did not appear to have confidence in her athletic performance.

"It wouldn't be the end of the world, I'm not saying I wouldn't be disappointed if I didn't go [to 2012], but at the same time <pause> there's the next 4 years" (Pg 4, Ln 107)

She commented that her main aim was the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, knowing that they were 4 years away - perhaps her athlete identity was still developing. My conversation with Katy became less and less focused on her sporting ambitions and instead covered more personal issues of how Katy experiences her life outside of the sporting gaze. As we spoke, I learnt about

her, and as I did so I quickly began to recognise the complexities Katy faced with her condition and also the challenges she encounters living in liquid modern times.

Theme 2: It's a condition, not a disability

Katy was diagnosed with Turner Syndrome at age 12. Despite riding as an able bodied rider since she was a child, she was classified for Para-Equestrian at age 14. She described the experience of being categorised via the classification system.

“Well a bit scary to start with, a bit unusual, but like now, you’re just so used to it” (Pg 29, Ln 784)

I consider Katy choosing to use the word ‘*unusual*’ to be almost literal. It was *usual* for her to be an able bodied rider, not to be labelled as a rider who could not compete differently to her peers. The process of discovering her classification was no doubt ‘*unusual*’ to her, suddenly finding herself as being redefined by a condition she had not long been acquainted with. Indeed Katy considers her sporting environment as the only place where she is forced to recognise her disability.

“Well it’s just when I’m riding. Yeah just when I’m riding” (Pg 31, Ln 829)

Katy would often refer to herself as a ‘para-rider’ rather than use any other connotation to define herself in sport. I was curious to know if Katy’s lack of athlete identity extended to a lack of disability identity. It did.

“I don’t really see myself as disabled, which sounds silly” (Pg 19, Ln 505)

I asked Katy why she thought is sounded silly.

“Because I am disabled really [laughs]” (Pg 19, Ln 509)

Although Katy was born with Turner Syndrome, her condition was not diagnosed until she began puberty. By all accounts therefore, Katy grew up experiencing herself as ‘normal’. I consider that because Katy acquired her disabilities as part of her condition, it was difficult for her to identify herself as a disabled individual. The above extract demonstrates the tension between an ontological and epistemological understanding of the self. Despite Katy not wanting to identify herself as disabled, she had to admit to herself that she was. Here is an exceptional example of the dichotomy of the medical and the social model of disability.

Katy appeared to separate when she used the word ‘para’ and when she used the word disability. She would focus on using ‘para’ when talking about herself in sport and ‘disability’ when discussing her other life-worlds.

“I prefer when all the para-riders, when we’re all together” (Pg 29, Ln 785)

I consider Katy’s lack of disability identity to stem from her not having to contend with this identity whilst she was younger. She often remarked how she experienced herself as a ‘normal’ individual and that her disability was not of huge concern to her.

“My disability’s never, I mean I never see it as an issue, I just see myself as the same as everybody else” (Pg 19, Ln 509)

However there was something unconvincing about Katy's words. Carefully, I prompted her to disclose more information about her condition and the effect it has on her life. She explained at various points in our conversation about how her condition affects her life in more than just being short.

"I was so 'so what if I'm short' but I guess there could have been you know like underlying things that were worse than just being small" (Pg 25, Ln 683)

Katy spoke of how her condition affects all aspects of her life-world. She outlined a specific pattern of cognitive deficits often observed with Turner Syndrome, with particular difficulties in visuo-spatial, mathematical, and memory areas.

"(...) my spatial awareness I'm like, I mean like really bad, really bad and its part of my disability (Pg 31, Ln 850)

Despite Katy giving glimpses of the barriers her condition presents when living in liquid modern times, she did not seem resentful, instead she appeared to be rather pragmatic and accepting of her situation.

"I've grown up thinking that there's nothing's wrong with me (...) there's nothing I haven't done because of it." (Pg 30, Ln 811)

She carried on to discuss her self-image.

"I feel like I'm 6ft to be honest – it's not until I walk past a mirror or something that I'm like oh yeah I'm small!" (Pg 31, Ln 841)

I found it interesting that Katy chose to describe herself as '6ft tall'. Her self-image was one of someone above the average height of a female, perhaps

using '6ft tall' to express that she feels comfortable with who she is. However, despite Katy considering herself to be equal to her peers, she was aware that she has the potential to be consumed differently because of how she looks.

"I guess maybe people know I'm <pause> not <pause> quite <pause> normal, but then I'm not like odd enough, um I think sometimes I think people know that something's not quite right"
(Pg 32, Ln 852)

This extract demonstrates Bauman's ambiguity of Otherness. Katy knows that her physical appearance does not conform to the standards of 'normality' she observes in her life-worlds, however she recognises that she is not instantly recognisable as Other. Katy knows that, compared to her peers, she is '*not quite right*'. She comments that she is not '*odd enough*' to be consumed (or rather rejected) as Other, implying that oddness is a contributing factor to the process of 'Othering'. I suggest that because Katy did not experience herself as disabled, and was aware that she is not necessarily labelled as such, her identity as a disabled individual is opaque and undetermined. Indeed, why would she choose to identify herself with this label, tying herself to all its unwanted and unwelcome nuances and significances if she does not have to? She concluded her thoughts on her condition with a somewhat solid reflection on the options she has when confronting the difficulties her condition brings with it.

"(...) it's kind of a fact of life really and there's nothing I can do about" (Pg 27, Ln 715)

Katy, as far as I could establish did not have a particularly strong athlete identity, nor did she have a particularly strong disabled (or anti disabled) identity. She

didn't really provide any evidence that she was conforming to Bauman's suggestions of the need to carve an identity in liquid modern times. Katy's identity did not seem to be a problematic task for her, and if it was she certainly kept it well hidden in her interview. Katy was a rider; it was very simple to her. She rode for herself first and for the sport second. I felt that this was the only indication Katy gave me of a particular identity that she hoped to have and actively sought to maintain. I found that Katy spoke a lot about who she was, what her personality was like and what qualities and characteristics she recognised in herself. These fragments of information allowed me to understand how Katy experienced present and future predicaments in her liquid modern surroundings.

Theme 3: A normal person but not a normal student

Whilst returning from the interview with Katy I reflected on our conversation and immediately drew comparisons between her sport and her. The sport of Dressage is concerned with discipline, with training, with rigidity and perfection. It is a sport which does not easily allow for fluidity, for change or novelty. It came through in Katy's interview that her way of living, both as a student and as an athlete, mirror the rules set out by Dressage.

Despite her not displaying a strong Paralympic athlete identity, the issue of being an athlete presented itself often in Katy's accounts of why she experienced her university experience as different to most.

"(...) if I didn't ride I probably would have gone away for university and I probably would have got a part time job" (Pg 37, Ln 1008)

She goes on to suggest that there is an understanding between herself and another student-athlete on her course about the way their university lives are constructed, that their university life-world is different to that of their course mates.

“Yeah there’s a similar way in like, ‘oh yeah I’m going training, I’ve got to train’ whereas like the others are like ‘nah I’ve got nothing on’ [laughs]” (Pg 41, Ln 1111)

However, there were a number of different instances in Katy’s account which makes me consider a different approach to Katy’s experience of Otherness at university. She did not provide me with enough direct or discreet information about her time as an athlete for me to interpret her as truly fulfilling the role of an athlete. As a dressage rider, absolutely; but not as an athlete. Instead I consider Katy’s feelings of difference at university to be bound up in her conflicting thoughts of the type of person she *is* at university against the type of person she feels she *should* be at university.

Katy had chosen to stay in her home town to study. Perhaps of more importance was that she chose to continue living at home whilst at university. I considered this information to give more of an insight into who Katy is than any particular image or identity she attempted to adopt or aspire to. As we spoke she would occasionally reveal aspects of her life which appeared to clash with Bauman’s interpretation of a liquid modern young adult. Katy admitted that she did not consider herself to be similar to her university peers.

“I don’t out drinking all the time, I’m very organised and I go home and I write up my lecture notes [laughs]” (Pg 31, Ln 1136)

Katy did not perceive herself to be a 'normal student'; that her dedication to her sport and to her academic endeavours made her different. I believe that because Katy did not witness that same behaviour from her peers, this feeling of difference was self-imposed. I asked Katy about other aspects of her university life she felt were similar to her university peers:

"I do go out, sometimes, yeah and I do go out and dress up (...) and then obviously all the hard work, the hours in the library, yeah so I guess I do get some of the experience" (Pg 19, Ln 496)

I found this extract to be revealing in Katy's perspective towards the university experience she believes her peers are having. I felt Katy was attempting to create the identity of a student which subscribes to the university swarm behaviour. However I felt she delivered this information with a quiet reservation; almost that she knows that this is not necessarily who she is but feels that she must conform to the behaviour to avoid being considered different or borderline Other. My interpretation of her words was that she added unnecessary emphasis on that she goes out '*sometimes*', and gets to '*dress up*' which she would not do if she were not at university. But the way in which Katy expressed she gets '*some*' of the experience made me consider that perhaps she realises that she does not, through her own choice, participate fully in the university experience. Indeed, Katy was the only participant to assume that her university life-world was similar to others in respect to '*hard work*' and '*hours in the library*'. For me, this demonstrated that Katy was happier, more content, participating in what could be considered more traditional associations of being at university. From the way Katy spoke it was clear that she was aware that her traditional, scholarly approach to her studies was dissimilar to those around her, especially when it came to socialising.

“They [friends] go out more than I do but that’s my choice you know” (Pg 40, Ln 1073)

“I’m doing my work instead of going home and getting into bed, or going to the pub” (Pg 42, Ln 1137)

Katy’s reoccurring concern about not participating the expected current day drinking culture of university was evident. I felt the way Katy spoke about these incidences was almost apologetic; as if she understood that her behaviour was different. I suggest this because Katy never completed any of her statements with any form of self-justification such as *‘but I don’t care because...’* or *‘it is not important to me because...’*. I had found other participants had used this mechanism when they were defending their behaviour or their lack of participation in university culture, quite often using their sporting commitments and ambitions as comprehensions to this. This was something Katy never did, rather she indicated that it was her commitment to her studies which prevented her from socialising as much as her peers.

“I think I’m much more busy, I feel like I do a lot more [studying] than anybody else [laughs] (Pg 40, Ln 1071)

Throughout the interview Katy admitted that she considered her university experience to be different to that of her peers. I found the section of my interview with Katy where she discusses what her time at university has meant to her as incredibly honest.

Katy: “(...) don’t think I’ve changed that much [laughs] I know that’s a bad thing to say” (Pg 16, Ln 424)

Me: “Why is that a bad thing to say, that you’ve not changed?”

Katy: "I guess sometimes I can think that maybe I've not had the whole university experience with not living away. Like if you ask someone who moved away they might say oh yeah I've learnt so much from other people but from staying at home, it's the same lifestyle I had before really."

I felt that talking about this topic was forcing Katy to admit her state of difference at university; forcing her to accept acknowledging that she does not experience this same sense of independence and personal growth at university as her peers often do. She acknowledges that to *'not change much'* is considered a flaw in liquid modern times; willingly admitting that the notion of 'changing' is a welcomed and considered positive personal attribute. This extract also provides evidence of the expected culture of university. Katy uses the *phrase* *'whole university experience'* with a tone of assumed knowledge when talking to me, that I will inherently understand the indication of type of lifestyle a university student is expected to live. Katy is not experiencing the expected or assumed student lifestyle during her liquid modern university experience. She has the *'same'* lifestyle she had before attending university. Yet additionally she comments that she *'has not learnt from others'* because she has chosen to live at home. I consider this to be another indication of the supposed teaching of university outside of the classroom; that Katy is admitting that she has limited her own experiences of Otherness because she has failed to widen her personal boundaries of experience and understanding. However, I ask Katy if she liked the lifestyle she had and the answer expressed that Katy has no desire to change her lifestyle to feel more included.

"Yes. I wouldn't change it" (Pg 16, Ln 439)

As Katy and I spoke about her academic life-world I couldn't help but be drawn to underlying tensions presented.

Me: "So at the moment do you think your life is pretty similar to everyone else that's around you?"

Katy: "No, nope, no [laughs] no!" (Pg 39, Ln 1065)

Katy seems to contradict herself regularly, constantly fluxing between if her behaviour was 'normal' or not. She chose to use the word 'normal' a great number of times as a method of her own contrast and comparison. Throughout the interview she seemed caught between when it was acceptable to consider herself 'normal' and when considering herself as 'not normal' presented a case of difference. Yet none of these circumstances of 'normality' appeared to contribute forcefully to any particular identity; be it athlete, student, disabled or anything else.

"I still go out, still see people, still watch TV like normal people do" (Pg 37, Ln 1010)

"I'm just not like a normal student really" (Pg 42, Ln 1136)

Katy's experience of herself was that she was a normal person, but not necessarily a normal student, and whilst her experiences of university life did not appear to reveal any form of Otherness, she certainly felt different to her peers. Yet, this was something that Katy was aware of; she was able to rationalise her feelings of difference by comparing her behaviour to the behaviour of her peers. For Katy, she appears to gain value by this comparison, seemingly considering her time at university to be better spent than others she sees around her.

Acknowledging that she was not a 'normal' student, I asked Katy to tell me where she thought she fitted in at university as a 19 year old Paralympic student-athlete. Her response was not what I was expecting.

*"Oh [laughs] I don't know, I don't fit in I'm not like any of them!"
(Pg 42, Ln 1125)*

I asked Katy to explain her answer:

"I live at home, for starters, none of many of them live at home, and then I think the riding bit of things <pause> taking all my medication, the disability and how that affects me as well <pause> but no, nothing obvious, just stuff things more behind the scenes" (Pg 42, Ln 1129)

This extract highlights the difficulty Katy is faced with when considering her self-identity and her place at university. She considers first and foremost that what makes her not '*fit in*' is the fact that she lives at home – something that she chooses to do and admits that she would not want to change, yet actively prevents her from experiencing university in a similar way to her peers. Secondly, is her reference to riding, yet she does not defend her position as an athlete. By her own admission, riding is something that Katy would do even if she were not competing, and so perhaps it is the sport of Dressage itself which she considers to alienate her rather than her Paralympic pathway – she competes in a uncommon, unpopular sport which can be considered elitist and difficult to connect with to those not part of the Equestrian world. Finally Katy mentions her condition, stating '*the disability*' rather than 'my disability', purposefully distancing herself from it. I consider this active distancing to demonstrate that perhaps Katy is aware that her condition does not contribute largely to her feelings of difference at university. It is the '*behind the scenes*'

comment which I suggest is of most importance. Here I feel Katy is revealing to me that it is not what is on show for everyone to see – her studying, her riding, her disability – which causes her to feel different to her peers. More that it is the way that Katy is as a person, her private self which causes her sense of difference. This is explored further in Theme 4.

Katy gave multiple direct and indirect examples of how she considers herself to be a normal person, but perhaps not a normal student. Recognising herself as studious, organised and sober, I felt Katy found it difficult to contend with the person she is actually most content to be at university against the person she considers she is perhaps expected to be. Katy's did not express anything which led me to consider that she was chasing a false sense of belonging, or attempting to create a false identity. She did not appear to be unhappy with her university life-world. Rather than being an unhappy individual, I felt Katy hinted that she maybe a person with a rather anxious, concerning disposition; someone who finds the condition of liquid modern living difficult to embrace at times.

Theme 4: A solid person in a liquid world

Katy alluded to the issue that her sense of difference comes from within, that there was nothing explicitly obvious which made her different. However, my conversation with Katy revealed some areas of her life-worlds which seem to go against the commonalities of living in a liquid modern society. Following on from the above theme, Katy reflected on now her reasons for being at university did not seem to adhere to the contemporary understandings of why people choose to go into higher education.

"I mean it isn't normal for people to know what they want to do at this age, it's perfectly normal for people to come to university and not a clue what they're going to do with their degree – I think it's just the way I am, it's just me." (Pg 38, Ln 1025)

Again, Katy referred to herself as not being 'normal' in regards to her academic efforts. This concern of Katy needing to justify her actions was common throughout her account. It was obvious that Katy was aware that her actions were at times at odds with the liquid modern condition, yet I felt this was indicative of her character.

"(...) most of my friends they don't, they don't really have a clue (...) at least I know where I want to go and if I only have one direction at least I have a direction" (Pg 18, Ln 487)

The tension in Katy's narrative in this above extract is palpable. Katy felt her peers 'don't have a clue' about their future, content with the fluidity of their commitments –reflective of the liquid modern condition. However, Katy believes it better, more advantageous to have a fixed, solid direction. I suggest that this idea of a fixed, identifiable future was evidence of Katy's anxious character. She was unable to be carried away by the current of liquid modern living because she was so determined, so desperate to reach a set target she feels will provide her with self-affirmation.

Katy had a very clear focus of what she wanted to achieve in regards to her career aspirations – a focus which left little room for flexibility. Despite needing a first class degree and a Masters degree to even begin her profession, consideration for an alternative life plan was not an option for this second year student.

Me: "Do you ever think of the future in terms of what you'd do if for whatever reason you don't become a sports psychologist?"

Katy: "[looks worried] No! It's not an option!" (Pg 18, Ln 468)

This idea of not planning for an alternative future was of immediate concern for Katy. She explained that considering an alternative career path was not even in idea she had entertained.

Me: "If you were to think about it [not becoming her profession], how does it make you feel?"

Katy: [pulls worried face] <pause> um <pause> a bit scared. I don't know what I'd do. That's just all I've thought, like all I've thought about" (Pg 18, Ln 474)

Katy exposed a great deal about her fears, insecurities and anxieties, often disclosing personal thoughts about her personality. I consider that part of this is that because Katy did not appear to conform to the liquid modern template of being casual, untroubled, carefree and flexible.

At times, Katy's lack of engagement in liquid modern times brought out potential naivety to a situation. Certainly in regards to her education, despite her insecurity at an alternative future, Katy seemed to consider herself immune to current economic hindrances. I asked her about the relationship she saw between her degree and her career aspirations:

"(...) the degree means I can get a job and plus I wouldn't be able to do the job I want to do if I didn't have this degree" (Pg 17, Ln 454)

I then asked Katy what made her time at university valuable:

"I guess preparing me for when I do become qualified. You know it's teaching me, preparing me for what I need to do for when I leave here" (Pg 17, Ln 465)

I consider this extract above to provide an insight into Katy's self-concept. She did not choose to consider her time at university as valuable in terms of personal growth or contributions to character or to her sport. Instead, Katy chose to consider its value in aiding her career ambition. But this was her – this was who she was. Katy admitted that it was her qualification which meant most to her, not the opportunity to gain life experience.

"Um it means, obviously the main thing it means is that I can become who I want to be, and that I get my qualification" (Pg 20, Ln 537)

These small glimpses of Katy's reflections on her life-worlds demonstrated that she did not appear to experience liquid modern society to the same degree as her peers. She lived her life with an aspect of solidity. Nevertheless, she could not avoid that she is part of the liquid modern process - and she admitted she found it difficult to adapt to the condition of flexibility and adaptability that is almost required of her. She seemed to fluctuate between understanding the 'liquid' Katy and the 'solid' Katy. The 'solid' Katy demonstrated how she enjoys routine, familiarity and organisation.

"Oh god very much, it's really important [routine] <pause> it freaks me out if it's not there (...) like I can't do it [laughs]." (Pg 36, Ln 977)

Yes despite her 'solid' personality coming through Katy also presented the more 'liquid' parts of Katy; that she is caught up in the perpetual motion of liquid modern condition, living frantically and unbalanced.

"I like it busy even if it does stress me out, don't know why though" (Pg 22, Ln 586)

Katy is organised, strict, and ordered yet finds herself in an accelerated lifestyle of constant movement, anxiety and pressure. The idea that Katy was a somewhat solid individual thawing in her liquid environments was puzzling. I felt Katy struggled to place her personality in her surroundings, finding it difficult to move at the same pace of those around her. Yet this was not a result of her disability, nor of her Paralympic sport – this was simply just because of who Katy was. Someone not completely soaked in Bauman's Liquid Modernity. Yet it was obvious that this troubled her as she understood herself to be different at times. From Katy's account, it would appear that failing to succumb to the current of the liquid modern way of life can indeed hinder, cause self-doubt and more anxiety than perhaps simply letting go and getting carried away by the possibility of change.

Who is Katy?

Katy's frequent references to her abnormality as a student, to her absolute certainty of career direction, to her need to ride to in order to feel calm presented a Paralympic student-athlete unlike the other participants. With no clear or obvious identity, with a different perception of university and a seemingly lack of convincing passion for her sport it was difficult for me to draw together who it was that I was talking with. I asked Katy how she associated herself with the labels she currently engages with; that of Athlete, Student and Disabled.

"I think the first thing would be the athlete, definitely, yeah that athlete, and then the second thing would probably be the student, well, no, I mean they'd be quite close together because they both are equally, well maybe not equally, the riding's more important obviously, but they both are important to me, as in if one of them was taken away [shakes head] I don't know, I don't know what I'd do <pause> disabled [looks around the room, laughs, shrugs] a bit further down!" (Pg 38, Ln 1034)

With Katy neither an athlete identity nor her student identity appeared to emerge as convincingly stronger over the other. She very much saw these identities as an almost equal part of her life, although perhaps with the 'rider' (not the 'Paralypian') being marginally more important in her self-identity. The label of disability though seemed to be of little significance to her, almost as if she felt she can peel off that label to a certain extent. I asked Katy to tell me who she was, and her answer is a mirror of the ordering of the labels she gives in the above extract.

"[wide eyed] Er ha, erm <pause> I am an international para-dressage rider studying at university to become a sports psychologist [look of hope on face, crosses fingers] <pause> I've got a growth disorder [laughs] eh that's it then really." (Pg 43, Ln 1162)

Katy's description of herself was factual. It did not give any indication of who Katy considered herself to be away from the categories she uses. I consider the fact that Katy did not provide any confessions or features about herself that she too was slightly unsure of who she was. However, I would contest that this was, in fact, quite common. Katy did not allude to understanding anything definitive about herself. Her Paralympic ambitions did not consume her. Her disability was currently of little concern to her. It would appear, that Katy did not consider herself particularly complex, or in such a way that she felt the need to characterise herself. Putting all labels aside, I consider Katy simply to be

someone dipping her toe in the liquid modern world, but right now lacks the emotional security in herself to jump right in. In fact, to not truly know one's self is very much akin with Bauman's observation of living in liquid modern times.

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